

results in the perception of a dyad, the mother/ daughter or grandmother/ granddaughter ritual polarity of goddess and serpent. The three generations or three phases (virgin-mother-crone) of womanhood are conceptualized as the Triple Goddess, the source of birth, multiplication and death.

But at this juncture patriarchal males, who attempt to evade death by embodying it for others instead of experiencing it themselves, appropriate the death-dealing (and indeed, devouring) aspect of the goddess.⁴⁴ This act of aggrandizement produces fierce competition, and ultimately conflict, between the two consorts of the goddess — the female serpent and the male hero (who is heroic because he represents patriarchal forces). This patriarchally-induced contention for the goddess's favours inevitably results in the belligerent hero's triumph over the pacific serpent. The hero thus asserts his claim, not merely to be the goddess's lover, but her son — not in order to obtain her guidance for his shamanic initiation, but as a manoeuvre in a power game. This averment of familial blood relations — defined increasingly in patriarchal terms — leads, after further bellicosity, to the son's achievement of an equal footing with the daughter.

In matrilineal eras, the status of sonship remained meagre. **Mana** — not property, which did not exist — was inherited, through ritual initiation, by female lineage.⁴⁵ So to achieve parity the son has to become the counterpart of the daughter, her twin — as in the myth of Artemis and Apollo. But the power-hungry patriarch is not content with this arrangement. True twins, to

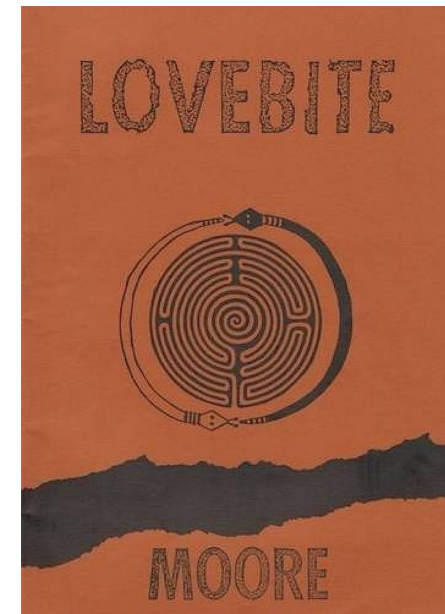
⁴⁴ Thus, in the Demeter-Persephone myth — a variant of the Red Riding Hood tale — the chthonic crone aspect of the Triple Goddess was converted into the male underworld ruler, Pluto. (The Snow White (Graves 1986, p.421) and Sleeping Beauty tales are also variants: both revolve around the patriarchal interruption of a young female's shamanic initiation trance. See Halifax 1980, pp.25-7 for an Eskimo variant.)

⁴⁵ "The shaman's vocation may... be passed from generation to generation, creating a shamanic lineage" (Halifax 1980, p.5).

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John Moore



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repression] that originated with them”. In fact: “The failure of autoplasmic manipulation to give men powers equal to women’s in procreation may have been the cause of their turning to alloplasmic manipulation of the natural world” (Bettelheim 1955, pp.192,138). Indeed, it sanctions not merely the manipulation of nature, but its domination and destruction, and the attempt to depart from it.

Neumann identifies as a **leitmotiv** of patriarchy the male development of hierarchy in an attempt to climb away from the dark, devouring mother toward the immortal light of the sun — a theme evinced in ziggurats, church spires, skyscrapers, rockets and other phallic imagery. Such enterprises are designed to assuage a primary fear of the patriarchal male: that of being seduced by the Mother Goddess, an act which would make him “regress” into being her incestuous son-lover, and thus relinquish his status as a patriarch. Under matrilineal conditions, the son always remains a son — an integral agency of the mother — and never becomes a father. But a patriarch by definition must base his identity on his status as a father and his denial of all connexion with his mother. Admitting any link would be tantamount to acknowledging male dependency on women, and men’s involvement in cyclical processes. To counteract this threat, and as an act of will-to-power, patriarchy evolved the ideal of the hero. “In a sense, man’s most ancient attempt to copy the sacred status of motherhood was the cult of the hero” (Walker 1985, p.47). Sometimes the hero was a saviour who gave his blood in order to redeem mankind from the cycles of nature. But often, and more importantly in the present context, the hero sacrificed the blood of others in order to ward off the fear of death. And bloodshed in the service of suppressing matrilineal life-ways remained especially heroic.

The ascendancy of the hero, as a representative figure of patriarchy, took place gradually, and finds dramatic expression in modifications of myth. These changes can be represented schematically as follows. Initially myths conceive the cosmic life-force as a pantheistic goddess, the Great Mother of All. Further sophistication

deed, older women were not merely spurned as sexual partners, but ultimately disempowered, enslaved or annihilated. “Nearly everyone knows the ugly story of Western man’s slaughter of the mothers and grandmothers of his race: the so-called witch mania”. But this recurrent phenomenon of “gynocide” should not be confined merely to the era of the Inquisition. The grandmother figure, that “implacable female Fate or cyclically destructive Crone Mother”, remains subject to perpetual patriarchal suppression. “She became the secret fear of Western civilization, whose massive attempts to destroy or at least deny her eventually sickened the society itself and poisoned its relationships between the sexes, in which man may have found real comfort and real courage to face the inevitable without forcing it prematurely upon his fellow creatures” (Walker, 1985, 125, 94–5).

Fear of death paradoxically results in mass murder. Men try to kill death by slaughtering someone other than themselves (including sacrificial saviours). “It has been suggested that such hidden, unacknowledged fears are the very forces that drive men to kill other members of their own [and other] species in such appalling numbers, as in war, dividing them into We and They, the latter always viewed as expendable. Part of the vast cultural attempt to deny death is the possibility of inflicting death on others in order to purge it from oneself” (Walker 1985, p.13). Indeed, not merely the institution of war, but civilization and the entire enterprise of culture derives from the failed attempt by males to imitate, rather than become female. “If we assume that the man felt compelled to make themselves similar to women — whether by so mutilating themselves that they could bleed from the genitals as women do, or by copying childbirth — if they even dimly realized that they inflicted these injuries on themselves because they wished to possess the procreative power of women, then we can understand why, when they failed in their purpose, they also become angry at women... and perhaps, after gaining political ascendancy, sought to retaliate on women the mutilation [physical or psychic — introcision or erotic

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aspect of the Triple Goddess which men found most intimidating in these circumstances: “the negative aspects of the all-powerful Mother, who embodied the fearful potential for rejection, abandonment, death” — in short, the crone or grandmother figure.⁴³ The latter, at the crux of female mysteries, represents both the earthly embodiment of the male fear of rejection, and the cosmic personification of the male fear of death. Thus this figure, and the entire dispensation she symbolizes, must be extirpated. Patriarchy bases itself upon the premise that “to achieve a rejection of death, man must reject the Mother manifested in all women, including his own mother”. Within the perspective of expansive — ultimately global — conflagration, womb envy modulates into its opposite: “Male eschatology combines male womb envy with womb negation”. And the latter inevitably produces not only misogyny, but sexual repression. The patriarchal “abhorrence of sex and reproduction began with a vast fear: the fear of death, of dissolution, of being swallowed up in the blackness of cosmic chaos — symbolically, the fear of the Crone”. Repudiating anarchy for order, and equating female rebirth rites with extinction, the patriarchal “denial of death was inevitably confused with denial of sex, for the very reason that man’s ‘little death’ in sexual intercourse was viewed as a foretaste of the ultimate death represented by the fearsome Goddess. To the extent, however slight, that the elder woman might resemble that fearsome image, she was hastily rejected as a possible sexual partner” (Walker 1985, pp.12,82,160,89).

Womb denial could not brook so close an approximation to the central coupling of the female mysteries — a coupling some men had despaired of ever authentically achieving — thus fueling the frustrations which led to their derogation of the female. In-

⁴³ The “male principle of consciousness, which desires permanence and not change, eternity and not transformation, law and not creative spontaneity, ‘discriminates’ [!] against the Great Goddess and turns her into a demon” (Neumann 1955, p.233). “But man couldn’t establish his ideological denial of death unless the Goddess’s death-dealing aspect was vehemently denied also” (Walker 1985, p.33).

the womb, but still desire its transformative capacities, they begin to envy its female possessors. Their envy derives from a recognition that women, through their womb consciousness, maintain a direct access to the cyclical mysteries of the cosmos — an access unavailable to men. Participating in the processes of generation and renewal, women possess the capacity to negotiate the labyrinthine intricacies of reincarnation, and thus effectuate rebirth. But men, bereft of comparable consciousness, and thus unable to influence their fate without the aid of women, fall into despair at the thought of their dependency, and the fear that female guidance might be withdrawn. They envy women for the autonomy their wombs provide, but also fear that this independence will cause women to overlook or neglect the male spiritual condition, and thus consign them to what they consider as adverse reincarnations.⁴² This envy intensifies with the development of a masculine ethos or ideology. “An ideology, religious or political, is a form of possession, and as such it is a possession of the ego”. And “by operating at this lower level of the ego” one remains “at the level of the unconscious workings of kaima”. Envious males need, but are unable “to make the unconscious conscious, to move out of the mechanisms of remorseless **karma** into a more enlightened or initiatic awareness of the dynamics of Being” (Thompson 1982, pp.33,50). But they can do so only with the aid of women, and their envy precludes this option, so they remain ensnared in illusion.

Envy deepens into resentment as the (unfounded) fear of death becomes more pronounced. This fear is then projected onto that

ing and death and the subsequent experience of rebirth and illumination are the authentic initiation for the shaman” (Halifax 1980, p.5).

⁴² Shaman women were credited with the capacity to comfort and direct the dying soul. For example: “Often, in the process of caring for dying persons, a dakini [crone priestess of India] was supposed to take the final breath of the deceased into herself with the ‘kiss of peace’, signifying the Goddess’s acceptance of the wandering soul... It was said of them also that they could bring the dead soul to a rebirth by sucking it into themselves with the final kiss, and that death in their arms could be sweet and painless, even ecstatic” (Walker 1985, p.75).

“Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee”.

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guided attempt to redesign male bodies to a female model, possibly in the hope of acquiring the female power of reproduction. Cutting off male genitals was constantly associated with fertility magic for ancient gods, in either human or animal form. The idea would have been to provide the male with a bleeding hole in crude imitation of a woman's body. [Patriarchal] myths assumed the male deity could give birth successfully as a result of this treatment" (Walker 1985, pp.47–8).

In other words: "When man, by subincision [or related forms of genital abrasion], make themselves **resemble** women, the obvious interpretation of this behaviour is that they are faying to **be** women". But the attempt always fails, partly because mimesis cannot be equated with participation (i.e., mimetic reproduction can never replicate organic reproductive capacities), and partly because of the unwitting parodic element in the male rites. Men are motivated to mimic female mysteries because they experience "vagina envy", a phenomenon "much more complex than the term indicates, including, in addition, envy of and fascination with female breasts and lactation, with pregnancy and childbearing" (Bettelheim 1955, pp.88,20) — indeed with the entire range of female transformational capacities. But the fascination arises from the negative emotion of envy, which distorts the character of its mimetic representations and indicates the latent presence of a deeper resentment, a profound fear. So on a superficial level males parody female mysteries by placing pain, not pleasure at the centre of their rites, and by celebrating, not birth, but death (i.e., bloodshed). The deeper disturbances of the envious male psyche, however, are apparent in precisely these perverse emphases.

Womb (or vagina) envy remains predicated upon the great denial — the denial of death.⁴¹ When males lose their reverence for

⁴¹ In contrast, males initiated into the (female) mysteries of cyclicity remain intimate with death and do not fear it. Such men master death by becoming shamans (a word which means "One Who Has Died" [Walker 1985, p.103]) and experiencing "the ordeal of entering the realm of death": "The encounter with dy-

facet of female ritual, hoping that merely assuming women's garments would effectuate the necessary identification of themselves as women. They made a fetish of this practice, as the persistence of priestly robes indicates. But this superficial imitation of women did not produce the desired result: wearing female clothes — like other piecemeal imitations such as the **couvade** — failed to confer women's transformational capacities on men. And so some men tried to imitate female mysteries by enacting their own rites. These rites were initially intended to bring the two sexes into close contiguity, but inevitably had the opposite effect, and drove them further apart. "While the male mysteries, in so far as they are not mere usurpations of originally female mysteries, are largely enacted in an abstract spiritual space, the primordial mysteries of the Feminine are connected more with the proximate realities of everyday life" (Neumann 1955, p.282). The concrete intersections of myth and everyday life were gradually supplanted by the abstract intersections of history and deracinated conceptualization.

Male rites try to effect a son's rebirth into manhood through the father. "The birth from the male womb is to rid the child from the infection of his mother — to turn him from a woman-thing into a man-thing" (Harrison 1927, p.36). But male attempts to emulate the birth and rebirth capacities of women were obviously hampered by an evident lack of appropriate genitalia. Men knew that female **mana** derived from the cyclical menstrual flow, and so attempted to manipulate their genitals in ways which would mimic the bleeding vagina. In different cultures, perhaps in proportion to the degree of desperation with which men hungered to become women, various wounds were ritually inflicted on the penis — ranging from circumcision through subincision to castration. In some cases, these lacerations were staunched by small flat stones which were chafed once a month to occasion a trickle of blood in imitation of the menses. Ultimately, this symbolic wounding resulted in the institution of blood sacrifice. "Among the oldest myths there is much evidence that formal sacrifices of males first arose from a mis-

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"It is no light undertaking to separate what is original from what is artificial in the nature of man. And to know correctly a state which no longer exists, which never existed, which possibly never will exist, and about which it is nevertheless necessary to have precise notions in order to judge our present state correctly."

Rousseau

Once upon a time...

Little Red Riding Hood enters the forest carrying provisions for her grandmother. Leaving the clearing, she glides through the depths of the greenwood.

All the elements of this scenario are significant, especially the constituent parts in the appellation of this suggestively anonymous — i.e., archetypal — female.¹ She is little — a young person, although

¹ Given the existence of multiple versions of the Red Riding Hood narrative, it remains necessary to specify exactly which scenario is being referred to at this juncture.

Zipes distinguishes between two types of Red Riding Hood narrative: the traditional oral folk tale of indeterminate but presumably considerable age, and the literary tale whose chequered history commences with its initial publication by Perrault in 1697. The latter type derives from but also reshapes the former in correspondence with ruling class requirements. Modifications in the literary

narrative become explicable in terms of its shifting ideological deployment. “The appropriation of folk customs and beliefs was translated by the church and civil order into forms and modes of control to legitimate the dominance of Christianity, men over women and children, and rising industrial groups, specifically among the bourgeoisie, overall other social classes... The fact that the **Little Red Riding Hood** syndrome as a cultural configuration of legalized terror has endured and remained so powerful can only be attributed to the significant role it played in the rise of a new ideology. This can be traced to the socio-religious transition during the Renaissance and Reformation. That is, **Little Red Riding Hood** as part of the literary socialization process came to reinforce socially accepted ways of viewing women, sexuality and nature”. More concisely: “The historical evolution of the literary **Red Riding Hood** parallels a development in sexual socialization in Western society” (Zipes 1983, pp.52–3,25).

Zipes’s thesis concerning the historical trajectory of the literary narrative remains convincing. But the subject of the present text is the traditional folk tale, and on this ground his analysis becomes more problematic. He admits that Perrault’s version of Red Riding Hood “was one of the few literary fairy tales in history which, due to its universality, ambivalence, and clever sexual innuendos, was reabsorbed by the oral folk tradition. That is, as a result of its massive circulation in print in the 18th and 19th centuries and of the corroboration of peasant experience, it took root in oral folklore and eventually led to the creation of the even more popular Grimms’ tale, which had the same effect”. Yet he uncritically accepts as his ur-text the folk version collected by Paul Delarue “about 1885” (Zipes 1983, pp.14,5). Zipes very much wants to have his cake and eat it. Although insisting that modifications in the literary versions of the tale correspond with changes in its ideological functions, and that literary and folk versions reciprocally interacted over time, he still maintains that an oral version collected during the late nineteenth century remains uncontaminated and representative of the tale’s original pattern. At the very least, given Zipes’s Marxist orientations, such an approach remains ahistorical and undialectical. But more importantly, it reveals a naïvety about the ways in which inscriptional encodement transforms, standardizes and crystallizes oral traditions, replacing a fund of motifs, themes and figures which can be adapted to different circumstances, with the rigid notion of a definitive version.

Moreover, Zipes suppresses some evidence which remains essential in establishing the tale’s pre-literary genealogy. He avers that “**Little Red Riding Hood** is of fairly modern vintage. By modern, I mean that the basic elements of the tale were developed in an oral tradition during the late Middle Ages”, and goes on to assert, among other things, that “the independent [i.e., oral] folk tales lack the motif of the red riding hood or the color red” (Zipes 1983, pp.2,6) — an assertion he uses to discredit mythopoeic interpretations of the tale. The inde-

by a shift from metaphoric to literal modes of thought; and a corresponding shift from interior significance to exterior meaning. Instead of metaphorically **becoming** female, men tried to imitate female processes and their ritualistic manifestation.⁴⁰ Herein resides the origin of that monstrous aberration known as mimesis.

Mimicry assumed some very blatant forms — transvestism, for example. Many “initiation customs not only permit but require transvestism. It seems to be another indication of the pervading desire to share the sexual functions and social role of the other sex” (Bettelheim 1955, pp.62–3). Transvestism played an important role in women’s mysteries, as indicated in the wolf’s cross-dressing in the Red Riding Hood narrative. Envious males latched onto this

a positive view the phallus would be valued in all stages from the excitement of erection to the happy shrinking of realized satisfaction. The whole misplaced construct of the phallus as plow, harrow, sword, or gun begins in sadomasochistic imagery of fertility worship. Women are enslaved by being worshipped as mothers, more specifically as breeders. Men are enslaved to the religion of a massively erect phallus as a weapon or producer. Nowhere in these metaphors is it acknowledged that the penis is an organ of exquisite pleasure”. Womb denial is based on the fact that “Through animal breeding man discovered that he played a role in creation, albeit a minor one, and his sense of superfluity was partially relieved” (Fisher 1980, pp.241,192). Gradually this minor role was inflated, while the female came to be seen as a passive receptacle for the actively generative male principle. As this process unfolded, men denied their castration/death anxieties by negating the womb, and its cycles of reincarnation, emphasizing in its place the phallic quest of personal immortality through the linearities of dynastic continuity and individual salvation.

The discovery of paternity constituted a frontal assault on matrilineal cosmogony and hence cosmology. It called into question the uroboric act of cosmic creation, and thus the entire cult-lore of incest-cannibalism which was founded upon it. “As a number of anthropologists have suggested, fatherhood, in the sense of the social definition and recognition of the status, represents a dividing line between human and animal society” (Arens 1986, p.96). The inauguration of the category of fatherhood severs the cosmic unity of consanguinous interrelatedness.

⁴⁰ In contrast: “Nowhere can we find any rites or mysteries in which women have tried to imitate a male process or function; this alone tells us about the source of original **mana**, or power. All blood rituals derive from the female blood of menstruation and childhood” (Sjöö and Mor 1987, p.184).

sense of kinship was based on the fact that “most people on earth... probably lived largely on plants”. But animal domestication — undertaken by men — completely altered this situation. “The insecurities of the human male in front of an incomprehensible and powerful universe were much intensified by the advances made with discoveries stemming from animal breeding. Crucial markers in the development of those most puzzling of human phenomena, sadism and seemingly motiveless malignity, can be chartered therefrom”. Male sexual — and existential — anxieties derive, not as in the Freudian model from misinterpreting the menstruating vagina as a wound, but from animal emasculation: “How much more sense it makes to associate man’s castration anxiety with his own aggressive powers and the fear thereby engendered, the practices humans learned through animal breeding” (Fisher 1980, pp.196,179,193,198).

“In the importance given to animals, the difficulties of taming and killing them”, by incipient patriarchal males, “there is a mingling of identification and cruelty which sheds light on the phenomenon of sadomasochism”. This ambivalent intermingling remains the crux of the issue: “humans violated animals by making them their slaves. In taking them in and feeding them, humans first made friends with animals and then killed them. To do so, they had to kill some sensitivity in themselves. When they began manipulating the reproduction of animals, they were even more personally involved in practices which led to cruelty, guilt, and subsequent numbness. The keeping of animals would seem to have set a model for the enslavement of humans, in particular the large-scale exploitation of women captives for breeding and labor, which is a salient feature of the developing civilizations” (Fisher 1980, pp.229,197).

During this period, as a result of male discoveries in animal breeding, “the distinction between fertility as generation-creation and fertility as fecundity-production is becoming confused in human thought”. For women this resulted in a gradual deterioration in prestige: “in historical times clear reference to fertility goddesses accompanies a progressive decline in the status of women. Emphasis on fertility was an opening wedge in the debasement of the female. The power of generation was removed from the individual woman and credited to a divinity, albeit a female one at first. Fertility worship led to the forced breeding of women; more important, it signified the perversion of sex from pleasure to production” (Fisher 1980, pp.285,215).

This shifting emphasis from pleasure to (re)production, derived from the patriarchal recognition of the male role in fertility, effects a complementary remodelling in concepts of male sexuality. “Only after humans have begun to control and breed animals, in particular the massive wild cattle, does the horn alone and unmistakably appear in conjunction with fertility worship. The new ideology — envisioning the human penis as a hunk of horn — denies the pleasurable aspects of sexual congress to focus on an ideal of the ever-ready breeder. In

pendence from literary influence of any folk version of the tale collected after the immensely popular texts by Perrault (1697) and the Grimms (1812) has already been contested. The question of how one measures developments or dates elements in oral tradition that are not corroborated by written evidence — which in itself automatically renders an oral tradition neither oral nor traditional — merely requires articulation to expose its absurdity. But in addition Zipes omits to mention some important facts, namely “When Perrault published his collection of fairy tales in 1697, “Little Red Riding Hood” already had an ancient history, with some elements going very far back in time. There is the myth of Cronos swallowing his children, who nevertheless return miraculously from his belly; and a heavy stone was used to replace the child to be swallowed [as in some versions of “Little Red Riding Hood”]. There is a Latin story of 1023 (by Egbert of Lieges, called *Fecunda Ratis* [“fruitful ship” — a fertile womb image]) in which a little girl is found in the company of wolves; the girl wears a red cover of great importance to her, and scholars tell that this cover was a red cap. Here, then, six centuries before Perrault’s story, we find some basic elements of “Little Red Riding Hood”: a little girl with a red cap, the company of wolves, a child being swallowed alive who returns unharmed, and a stone put in place of the child”. Furthermore, this commentator prudently remarks, in contrast to the spurious certainty of Zipes: “There are other French versions of “Little Red Riding Hood”, but we do not know which of them influenced Perrault in his retelling of the story” (Bettelheim 1985, p.168n).

Given such a context — one in which an ancient oral narrative has been appropriated, encoded and distorted for authoritarian purposes during historical times — how can one determine the nature of the original narrative (or more precisely the assemblage of narrative components which form the tale’s various permutations), let alone restore it to its pristine condition? This question remains all the more pertinent given that any written version, by codifying an essentially fluid aggregation of narrative components, necessarily distorts its source materials. But even granting the fidelity of a transcriber to an oral source, there are no guarantees that the source did not convey — wittingly or unwittingly — a corrupt or deformed version. Deformation may have begun at a date far earlier than Zipes suspects; the present text maintains that he merely documents the most recent, although particularly virulent, wave of distortion and misrepresentation.

Given this hermeneutic quagmire, how can retrieval occur? The answer lies in an application of the method of iconotropic recovery invented by Robert Graves. According to the latter, all myths have been subject to iconotropic deformation: “I define iconotropy as a technique of deliberate misrepresentation by which ancient ritual icons are twisted in meaning in order to confirm a profound change of the existent religious system — usually a change from matriarchal to patriarchal — and the new meanings are embodied in myth”. To reverse this process,

ritual icons must be restored to iconographic form. In the present case, the Red Riding Hood narrative can “be recovered intact by the simple method of restoring the... myth to iconographic form, and then re-interpreting the iconographs which compose it” (Graves 1986, pp.219n, 229). And such restoration occurs through the use of intuition.

The exact degree of empirical evidence required to substantiate intuitive insights and subsequent hermeneutic processes remains subject to debate. Graves asserts that “I [do not] trust my historical intuition any further than it can be factually checked” (Graves 1986, p.488). D.H. Lawrence reverses this emphasis by according corroborative data a merely secondary position in comparison with intuitive insight: “I am not a proper archaeologist nor an anthropologist nor an ethnologist. I am no ‘scholar’ of any sort. But I am very grateful to scholars for their sound work. I have found hints, suggestions for what I say... in all kinds of scholarly books... Even then I only remember hints — and I proceed by intuition” (Lawrence 1975, pp.11–12). Fredy Perlman takes this process further and denounces empirical evidence as the antithesis of intuition: “The seer of now pours his vision on sheets of paper, on banks of arid craters where armored bul- lies stand guard and demand the password, Positive Evidence. No vision can pass their gates. The only song that passes is a song gone as dry and cadaverous as the fossils in the sands” (Perlman 1983A, p.2). Graves grounds modifications in poetic myth in changing historical conditions. Lawrence subordinates fact to poetic intuition. Perlman abandons the discourse of history even while taking it as his subject. The present text takes a synthesis of these perspectives as its departure point. It rejects history and linear historical consciousness, and seeks in myth — myth restored to its primal iconographic form — and cyclical mythic consciousness, techniques for effectuating total liberation.

In a series of provocative essays, John Zerzan has called for the abolition of representation, suggesting that “Only a politics that undoes language and time and is thus visionary to the point of voluptuousness has any meaning”. At the basis of this conclusion lies the insight that “the origin of all symbolizing is alienation” (Zerzan 1988, pp.35, 49), but his formulations lead to stark inexpressivity and barren silence. Viewed from the perspective of myth, however, Zerzan’s intuitions are revived. Iconographically restored myths, incorporated as lived experience, abolish time because they are timeless, derived from the achronous condition of Dreamtime. And myths are embodied, not in referential language (in which words are taken as referring to some external reality), but iconic language (a term which denotes the notion of mythic language being its own reality, rather than merely symbolizing some external reality).

Zerzan complains that art, like all systems of symbolic representation (including language) “is always about ‘something hidden’. But does it help us connect with that hidden something? I think it moves us away from it” (Zerzan

But to activate their germinal potentialities, men must be impregnated, and to do so they must metaphorically become women to acquire female genitalia and generative capacities. They must overcome their inner male dividedness by pairing their “masculine” and “feminine” aspects to attain “uroboric bisexuality” (Neumann 1955, p.173). “The labial wound in the side of Christ is an expression that the male shaman, to have magical power, must take on the power [read: **mana**] of woman. The wound that does not kill Christ is the magical labial wound; it is the seal of the resurrection and an expression of the myth of eternal recurrence. From Christ to the Fisher King of the Grail legends, the man suffering from a magical wound is no ordinary man; he is the man who has transcended the duality of sexuality, the man with a vulva, the shamanistic androgyne” (Thompson 1981, p.109). Androgynously communing with shakti, female energy and female form, the male initiate realizes that “not until he had made a vulva of his own heart and had felt it break open to give birth to a love he had always felt to be the embarrassing, illegitimate bastard of his secret life, did he dare approach this altar of the immediate, intimate God” (Thompson 1985, p.215). Infused with **charis** and initiated into the mysteries of incarnation, he experiences rebirth as a consort or emanation of the sacred female.

Over time, however, male reverence for the womb turned, for some men, into womb envy and ultimately womb denial. “Females can identify with the mother and expect to achieve her power [read: **mana**]; males have had to reach outward and compensate for their inability to bear children. Womb envy precedes penis envy” (Fisher 1980, p.124).³⁹ This deterioration was accompanied

³⁹ What are the origins of this gradual shift from reverence to hatred of the womb among males? One commentator discerns its provenance in the discovery of fatherhood, a phenomenon itself rooted in the domestication and exploitation of animals. In archaic eras, “there is a sense of kinship between animals and humans,” an “interrelationship between the animal and human world”: “Humans did not always make sharp distinctions between themselves and animals”. This

techniques of Tantric yoga and identified with the Goddess herself through sexual union with her earthly representative” (Walker 1983, p.929). Such men were not duped by “the yogic myth that sexual repression is necessary for the elevation of **kundalini** and the autosemination of the brain” (Thompson 1981, p.77). Like the women, they brought into equilibrium the two poles of the spine, the sexual and the spiritual, passion and compassion. But whereas the women set up a circuit of energy between the womb and the belly, figured in the labia and the lips, and empowered by the menses, the men in contrast create a complementary loop between the genitals and the brain, figured in the penis and the tongue, and galvanized by semen (“Latin **lingus**, ‘tongue’, was derived from Sanskrit **lingam**, ‘phallus’” (Walker 1983, p.1002).)

Under female guidance, the male initiate achieves the customary erection of deep trance, and simultaneously experiences the sexual orgasm of the body and the spinal orgasm of the spirit. “As the male feels as if the semen were traveling up the spine, he feels as if the spinal column were a vagina, and the brain a womb where he is becoming reborn. The yogi is in this way the androgyne of prehistory reacheived” (Thompson 1981, p.33).

In this way men too could participate in the primal scene of cosmic creation, uniting mysteries of sexuality and alimentionation through the metaphoric agency of the seed — which fecundates through pleasure and generates foodstuffs from its nucleus. Primal male mysteries are concerned, not with transformation per se, but with germination and insemination. The relationship between men and women remains analogous to that between a fruit, the womb of a plant, and the seeds it contains: men are always offspring and agents of women,³⁸ and like their natures, their mysteries are always seminal.

³⁸ “The phallus, male sexual energy,... was understood to be originally contained inside the Goddess.” Images show “the phallus **servi**ng the Goddess, women, and the life processes of all” (Sjöo and Mor 1987, p.61).

1988, p.54). Symbols “stand for” a reality which can be apprehended only through their mediation, which inevitably produces alienation. But mythic thought does not function in this way. It operates in a metaphorical, not a literal, manner. And metaphors function, not by pointing to a reality which they symbolize and thus render inaccessible, but through a play of resemblances and differences. Mythic consciousness results from a “desire to apprehend in a total fashion the two aspects of reality... [the] continuous and discontinuous; from [a] refusal to choose between the two; and from... [an] effort to see them as complementary perspectives giving on to the same truth”. Rather than signifying a concealed reality, it perceives analogies through modes of associational thought: “it is this logic of oppositions and correlations, exclusions and inclusions, compatibilities and incompatibilities, which explains the laws of association, not the reverse” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, pp.98–9, 90). The resulting semiotic lattice, based on the principle of **bricolage**, remains entirely ludic. Mythic consciousness thus avoids the alienation inherent in all symbolization, yet retains the possibility of linguistic expressivity. It abolishes language, and yet facilitates unestranged intersubjective communication.

But mythic language, to be reactivated, must be purged of its historical accretions, all those iconotropic distortions and misrepresentations (including those perpetuated by Zerzan) which have deformed it into a key instrument of domination and control. A major problem in this context remains the fact that myths have been subject to iconotrophy for so long. Hence, Andrew Lang’s remarks on totemism — an important issue in the present text — are also relevant to the methodology of iconographic recovery: “By the nature of the case, as the origin of totemism lies far beyond our powers of historical examination or experiment, we must have recourse as regards this matter to conjecture” (Freud 1983, p.109n). Intuition, imagination, speculation and conjecture are inevitably the most useful tools in an area which has been subject to systematic social amnesia.

“As anthropologists have recognized, drawing parallels between archaic cultures and their contemporary surviving remnants remains fraught with danger. Just because primal peoples have not been subject to history does not mean that their myths have not been subject to iconotrophy. “The beliefs and rituals of present-day preliterate peoples represent only the most recent phases in a long, complex and, to us as well as to them, unknowable sequence. We cannot draw definitive conclusions as to their origin by studying the characteristics they exhibit today” (Bettelheim 1955, p.11). And as Freud rather quaintly but nevertheless lucidly explains: “It should not be forgotten that primitive races are not young races but are in fact as old as civilized races. There is no reason to suppose that, for the benefit of our own information, they have retained their original ideas and institutions undeveloped and undistorted. On the contrary, it is certain that

not entirely a child. Her identity remains veiled behind an eponymous red hood. The colour indicates that she is currently experiencing her **menarche**, an incipient awareness of her innate power (or **mana**) and (pro)creative potentials. The hood signifies her unbroken hymen — or at least an unfecundated womb.² The reference to

there have been profound changes in every direction among primitive races, so that it is never possible to decide without hesitation how far they are distortions and modifications of it. Hence arise the all-too-frequent disputes among the authorities as to which characteristics of a primitive civilization are to be regarded as primary and as to which are later and secondary elements. The determination of the original state of things thus invariably remains a matter of construction” (Freud 1983, pp.102-3n).

Freud’s caveat remains relevant. Only intuition can determine origins, including the original configurations of primeval mythic paradigms. Empirical evidence can serve to illustrate intuitive insight, but its absence does not render the latter inauthentic. “At the edge of history, history itself can no longer help us, and only myth remains equal to reality. What we know is less than what we see, and so the politics of miracle must be unacceptable to our knowledge to be worthy of our being” (Thompson 1971, p.163). When history can no longer act as the final arbiter, myth must.

² Primal peoples were well aware of a distinction which has only recently been rediscovered in the West: namely, the difference between sexuality and reproduction. Neumann emphasises this point: “For many good reasons, the basic matriarchal view saw no relation between the sexual act and the bearing of children. Pregnancy and sexuality were dissociated both in the inner and outward experience of women. This may be readily understood when we consider that these early societies were characterised by a promiscuous sex life that began far before sexual maturity” (Neumann 1955, p.26). Amongst the additional reasons Neumann neglects may be mentioned the following. First, anthropologists and mythologists habitually equate sexual relations with heterosexual copulation. Western academics may experience sexuality in this limited form, but they should not attribute this deficiency to primal peoples. The latter are not constrained by Western puritanism, and hence attribute a positive nature to sexual pleasure totally distinct from any procreative purpose. Moreover, ethnologists should not assume that primal people dissociate sexuality and reproduction through ignorance of the connexion — in the specific case of copulation.

Walker makes an interesting point about primal birth control, but then falls into the copulation trap: “Transition from matriarchal to patriarchal societies usually destroyed the natural mammalian system of birth control practiced by animals and primitive people: women used to refuse sexual relations [read:

tion: “The male embodies the mystery of death; his climactic phallus seems to say it all. We come out of matter (**materia, Mater**), and we are simply many little pieces broken off from the One; as fragments we can only hope to lead a fragmentary life until the One takes us back in death. The Great Mother is no simple notion from primitive religion, but an idea in a complex mythology that became demythologized and secularized by the Presocratics, but not changed. The male as the limited and vanishing principle and the female as the unlimited, eternal, and containing principle are simply expressed differently by Anaximander from the manner used by the painters of Lascaux or Çatal Hüyük” (Thompson 1981, p.128). To overcome this fragmentary condition, men must seek initiation into the female mysteries of cyclicity: “the process needed to initiate men... originally belonged to women... male initiation depends or depended on women” (Bettelheim 1955, p.173).

Metaphysically becoming a woman was the only route to direct communion available to men; the alternative remained a conjunction by proxy through the mediation of a female intercessor. “It will be objected that man has as valid a claim to divinity as woman. That is true only in a sense; he is divine not in his single person, but only in his twinhood. As Osiris, the Spirit of the Waxing Year he is always jealous of his weird, Set, the Spirit of the Waning Year, and vice-versa; he cannot be both of them at once except by an intellectual effort that destroys his humanity... Man is a demi-god: he always has either one foot or the other in the grave; woman is divine because she can keep both her feet always in the same place, whether in the sky, in the underworld, or on this earth. Man envies her and tells himself lies about his own completeness, and thereby makes himself miserable; because if he is divine she is not even a semi-goddess — she is a mere nymph and his love for her turns to scorn and hate” (Graves 1986, p.110).

To resolve his inner duality, and overcome tendencies to envy, primal man became a **shakta**, “a male worshipper [sic] of the Tantric image of the Great Goddess, Shakti; a man versed in the

lovers of Mother Goddesses have certain features in common: they are all youths whose beauty and loveliness are as striking as their narcissism. They are delicate blossoms, symbolized by the myths as anemones, narcissi, hyacinths, or violets, which we, with our [sic] markedly masculine-patriarchal mentality, would more readily associate with young girls” (Neumann 1954, p.50) – and for obvious reasons. Rather than merely desiring sexual union with women, they want – in order to participate fully in female mysteries – to become women.³⁷ One of Nancy Friday’s male respondents makes a highly articulate remark which precisely exemplifies the gender attitude of primal men: “At times I have thought it would have been nice if I had been a girl, for then I could have been a lesbian” (Friday 1980, p.351).

Men aspire to the ontological status of the (biological) female so that they can participate in the rites of sexual/ alimentary transformation. Through such participation they achieve total mystical union with the transcendent female principle (the Goddess), share in the abundance of female creative capacities and, most importantly, firmly situate themselves within the cyclical patterns of birth, death and regeneration. “The natural rhythm of the female is one of eternal recurrence”. But without female aid males, with their tendencies to linearity, remain unable to transcend dissolu-

³⁷ In certain traditions, a “total feminization of the male shaman” occurs. Initiates become so-called “soft men”, and experience bodily, behavioural and vocal changes. “The transformative process can also involve an actual change in sex roles. The ‘soft man’ comes to experience himself sexually as a female”. Such males are reputed to be capable of giving birth and possess great medicine power: “androgynous shamans were believed to be the most potent of all wizards” (Halifax 1980 pp.23–4).

By this point it should be apparent that the divergencies between male and female initiation rites are based upon the biological differences of sex, rather than the cultural differences of gender. In archaic eras, gender identities were free-floating and subject to modulation by desire. As will become apparent, however, the rise of the control complex is marked at this level by a canalization of free-flowing libidinous energies and a subsequent rigidification or crystallization of compulsory gender identities.

heterosexual copulation] during pregnancy and lactation, a period lasting from two to six years for each child... In pagan times, women used some fairly effective birth-control devices, ranging from vaginal sponges to abortifacient drugs” (Walker 1983, pp.103,104). The fact remains that varieties of sexual experience were available to all – even pregnant and lactating women! – and sexual relations should not be exclusively correlated with sexual intercourse.

Nevertheless, in the context of determining the significance of the hood worn by Red Riding Hood, it is worth emphasising Neumann’s point about primal promiscuousness, particularly in childhood. Bettelheim attacks the notion that adolescent initiation rites are designed to prevent incest – a point taken up later in the present text. “If, indeed, the purpose of initiation rites is to enforce the incest taboo, they occur too late in the child’s life. Among the tribes that have the most elaborate rites, children begin to have sexual intercourse at an early age, long before the ceremonies take place. Also, a rite that is immediately followed by indiscriminate cohabitation with, among others, mothers and mother substitutes cannot be said to be successful in enforcing the incest taboo”. Indeed, Bettelheim continues: “Among the Australian aborigines, whose society is one of the most primitive known to us and whose initiation rites are very elaborate... they [children] may be invited by a mother, older brother or sister, or some other person to indulge in sexual intercourse with an adult or a child [not necessarily of the opposite sex?] of the same age standing near by” (Bettelheim 1955, pp.75–6). The implicit correlation of sexuality and copulation should be noted in passing, but the main point here remains to emphasise the lack of sexual inhibition among primal peoples, including children.

Given this degree of sexual licence, it may seem unlikely that Red Riding Hood has retained her hymen, although even if she has this should not be construed to imply a lack of erotic experience. During such eras females were designated as “‘virgin’ not because they took no lovers, but because they took no husbands” (Walker 1985, p.74). Certainly, however, any childhood sexual intercourse could not have resulted in any issue. Hence, the hood signifies, at least, an unfecundated womb.

Given that in the above both Neumann and Walker refer to the notion of matriarchy, it may well be opportune to tackle this problematic term. Concerning the latter, Perlman points out that “Matri refers to mother, but Archy comes from an altogether different age. Archy refers to government, to artificial as opposed to natural order, to an order where the Archon is invariably a man. An-archy would be a better name... The Greek prefix ‘an’ means ‘without’” (Perlman 1983A, p.11). All quoted references to matriarchy in the present text should be regarded in this light.

riding intimates a growing susceptibility to erotic energies, a desire to ride and be ridden in the sexual sense.

A pubescent, menstruating virgin, she ventures into the forest, a site of transformation in Western culture. This journey constitutes her rite of passage. Leaving behind the world of domestication and order, she travels further into the wilderness. Her aim remains to find her grandmother³ – to be initiated into the mysteries by this Earth Mother figure, and to establish contact through the latter with her ancestors, their traditional ways, and the origins of life. This is her vision quest. As an offering, she takes provisions and her first menstrual blood – an early linkage of food and sexuality which becomes a **leitmotiv** in the narrative.

At the point of becoming fertile through her **menarche**, she goes to visit a crone who has reached the close of her fertile period, her menopause.⁴ But the latter condition does not connote a loss of **mana**. On the contrary, “the Crone stage in Witchcraft [is] considered the time of life when experience and wisdom bring a woman to her full power” (Starhawk 1987, p.297). And the initiating grandmother is clearly a witch. In pagan times, initiation “rites were often governed by old women, due to the ancient belief that post-menopausal women were the wisest of mortals because they permanently retained their ‘wise blood’” (Walker 1983, p.641). The fact that the grandmother provides Red Riding Hood with her characteristic garment acquires additional significance in this context. The act of fashioning the maid’s red cape identifies the former as a spinster, a spinner or weaver of fate as well as clothes. She

³ As “grand” remains a synonym for “great”, the grandmother can be identified as a type of the Great Mother.

⁴ Menopause is “the phenomenon which is limited for all practical purposes to the human species alone” (Fisher 1980, p.159). It not only remains a defining characteristic of humanity, but testifies to its cooperative, humane capacities. In primal contexts, however, “a term such as ‘old’ signifies status rather than chronological age” (Bettelheim 1955, p.193). Red Riding Hood’s grandmother may not be senescent, particularly given the early age at which sexual experience commences in such communities.

passional consciousness, concluded with the maid’s return to the community. Replete (indeed, reborn) with the mantic capacities of a prophetess or shamanic healer, she employed her endowments to promote communal harmony and enrichment through embodying and exercising **charis**. In addition, the unbroken tradition of the mysteries of consanguinity, which physically linked the initiate to the origin of life in primal chaos, remained intact. Universal harmony prevailed.

But now, in the case of Red Riding Hood, a rupture occurs, and everything is thrown into a harsh, jangling discordance. The figure of the patriarch or control force enters the scene. Usually represented as the maid’s father, he arrives to assert his prerogative: to claim his rights of paternity; to define female relations as subordinates, as property; and to annihilate their **mana** and way of life through a disruption of their rites. He typifies the treacherous, unfilial male who has brutally severed his connexion with the primal matrix. Earth, nature, the biosphere, the blood mysteries, the community of women – all things female now become subject to his conquest and denudation.

The motivations which cause the patriarch to act in this way are not difficult to discern. In matristic eras, men are peripheral to the community of women, the real locus of primal cult-lore.³⁶ Sharing only minimal participation in female transformative rites, and virtually excluded from female transformational capacities, they remain in awe of women. “The transformation mysteries of the woman are primarily blood-transformation mysteries that lead her to the experience of her own creativity and produce a numinous impression on the man” (Neumann 1955, p.31). As adjuncts, rather than cultivate their masculinity, which they regard as worthless, they aspire toward the ideal condition of womanhood. “All [male]

³⁶ “According to old ballads gathered from the bards of northern Europe, in ancient times men could not perform sacred poetry, invocatons, or any form of magic unless they were educated and directed by women” (Walker 1985, p.53).

must confront this issue if they are to achieve anything but a failed because incomplete revolution. To have any meaning, revolution must be total, comprehensive in its scope. In **The Mass Psychology of Fascism**, Reich has demonstrated how authoritarianism thrives on the irrational. And the taboos against incest and cannibalism are inherently irrational (irrational because incest seems so inevitable, and cannibalism so alien, to hominid life).

Clearly, this is not a call to commit indiscriminate incest, and certainly not cannibalism! To do so would be merely to fall into the trap set by the control complex. Committing the inverse of those acts prohibited by the control force merely propels the perpetrator into the arms of the counter-control force. Such a response does not transcend the control complex. Only eversion can achieve such a transcendence. And in the present context, eversion can be identified as a recovery, individually and collectively, of totemic consciousness, informed by the most enlightened contemporary anarchic perspectives.³⁵ Intimations concerning such a recovery will appear later. But at present the Red Riding Hood narrative must be resumed.

The maid and her grandmother were last seen locked in an uroboric embrace, a flowing circuit of kundalini energy. From time immemorial this ritual initiation, following the transmission of com/

the capacity which sets in motion social and cultural systems” (Arens 1986, p.44). If the latter phrase denotes the control complex, then these commentators are correct in their assessments.

³⁵ The **Fifth Estate** group, for example, point to “an emerging synthesis of postmodern anarchy and the primitive (in the sense of original), Earth-based ecstatic vision”. Outlining the reasons for their “profound appreciation of the social and cultural forms of the primal societies which preceded the relatively short epoch of human existence we call ‘civilization’”, they state: “for us, this inquiry into the primitive affirms those pre-technological cultures, not only because of their mythic ties to the cycles of the earth, but also because of their communal solidarity and stateless freedom. We do not see these early anarchic social patterns so much as a distinct goal to replicate, but rather as a guide for creating a vision in which social peace and ecological balance are re-established” (**Fifth Estate**, Vol. 20, no. 3 (Winter/Spring 1986), p.10; Vol. 24, no. 1 (Spring 1989), p.2).

embodies the Fates, “the ‘spinners’ who hold the thread of destiny in their hands”, and acts as a seer: “Part of the process of weaving the future depends on divining what lies ahead (as well as what lay in the past). The Crone is the soothsayer, the ‘conversation woman’ or ‘spawife’ who wore hooded garments and traveled around foretelling the future” (Noble 1983, pp.71, 77). The Fates became anglicized as fays or fairies, and witches “dressed exactly like fairies. They wear a red mantle and hood, which covers the whole body. They always wear these hoods. An old woman living at Holmesfield, in the parish of Dronfield, in Derbyshire, who wore ‘one of those hoods called “little red riding hoods”, used to be called the old witch”” (Zipes 1983, p.60n). Furthermore, “in Britain, ‘a red woven hood’ was the distinguishing mark of a prophetess or a priestess” (Walker 1983, p.1070). Given these identifications, the fact that Red Riding Hood’s mother impels her daughter’s quest toward the grandmother gains another level of signification. These three figures, each from successive generations, represent the Virgin-Mother-Crone aspects of the witches’ deity, the Triple Goddess, the three phases of the Moon, which were held to govern menstrual cycles.

On her way, Red Riding Hood encounters a wolf, but as an innocent does not recognize or suffer adversity through his predatory aspects. Holistically integrated, she does not fear the wild inhabitants of the outer world, nor the untamed instincts which dwell within her. Able to commune with both natures, she dances and plays with the wolf. In return, the latter — who significantly knows the maid’s appellation — encourages her to shed some of her character armour, acquired within the civilizing area, which has begun to crystallize and rigidify around her. He reanimates her diminishing appreciation of the beauties of Nature, those experiential participations actively discouraged by civilizers, and in particular encourages her to pick some flowers for her grandmother. Enrapt in the search for ever more beautiful blossoms, she loses all track of time and space, those basic coordinates of domination so deftly

exposed by John Zerzan. Engrossment does not constitute a distraction from the quest, but its prerequisite. Moreover, the flower-picking also contains rich symbolic meanings. Flowers are the sexual organs of plants. Hymens are conventionally known as flowers: women are deflowered when their hymens are broken. And menstrual blood was called the flower (or flow-er) in ancient times: "As any flower mysteriously contained its future fruit, so uterine blood was the moon-flower supposed to contain the soul of future generations" (Walker 1983, p.638). The wolf does not rape the maid, but encourages her to explore her own sexuality and the mysterious dimensions of her onsetting fecundity. But this solitary, introspective, even masturbatory phase cannot continue forever. The maid resumes her journey to fulfil her quest, taking both provisions and flowers, another linkage of food and sexuality.

Eventually reaching the remote, secluded abode "under the three big oak trees" (Grimm 1982, p.63), she expects to find her familiar, kindly granny. But the witchy crone has lycanthropically transformed herself into her totem animal,⁵ and appearances are no longer congruent with reality. In the wood, the grandmother appeared in the outer guise of a wolf, but maintained her humanly affectionate disposition. In the dwelling, however, while appearing in the trappings of a human grandmother, she assumes her animal nature. Boundaries are lowered, human and animal energies commune, her ego dissolves or is "eaten". And the same process transforms the maid. Initiation occurs, not through instruction,⁶

⁵ "Theriomorphic imagination is at the bottom of the whole concept of totemism" (Huizinga 1970, p.164).

⁶ The verbal element remains minimal. In a contemporary account, initiation appears almost entirely beyond words. The neophyte responds directly to the initiator: "I instantly felt a melting away of every barrier between us; we were as one. The mere glance of an eye had infinite meaning. The slightest change of expression conveyed full intent. We had complete rapport at all levels of understanding. I knew his thought as he knew mine. Did this telepathic facility come from some primitive recess of the mind used before ancestral man communicated in formal language?" (Halifax 1980, p.144).

sion (authorized consumption). And, **mutatis mutandis**, the two spheres are organized in comparable patterns for identical reasons. Consequently, the motive power energizing this system remains the antithesis of its counterpart in the anarchic model. Whereas in the latter contact between elements always accords with the maximization of pleasure and the minimization of pain for all participants, here the permissibility of contact depends purely upon its conformity with arbitrary rules maintained by the control complex, irrespective of the pain or pleasure caused in the process.

Some important contrasts between the anarchic and coercive models thus arise at precisely this point. First, whereas the anarchic model offsets voluntary limitation in consumption against unlimited sexual expression, the coercive model intervenes in both spheres and imposes compulsory controls. The anarchic model allows unfettered sexual expression, while the coercive model draws distinctions and makes an absolute prohibition against incest, the heart of matrilineal consciousness and lifeways. The anarchic model joyously repudiates the consumption of animal flesh, including that of humans (although retaining a form of symbolic ritual cannibalism), while the coercive model prohibits anthropophagy, but allows the consumption of practically anything else, including animal flesh.

Such are the outlines of the perverse distortion of totemic consciousness effected by the invasion of the control complex. But, for contemporary proponents of anarchy, the crucial issue remains the light thrown on the most ancient and deeply-seated control structures in the present psychosocial environment. The taboos against incest and cannibalism are the basic instruments through which the control complex maintains its domination over humanity.³⁴ Proponents of anarchy, who desire total global liberation,

³⁴ For Lévi-Strauss, "neither a feature of nature or culture, nor a composite of the two, the [incest] prohibition'... is the fundamental step because of which, by which, but above all in which, the transition from nature to culture is accomplished'. In effect, as with Freud, Lévi-Strauss views the prohibition of incest as

sexuality in a hierarchical manner, creating distinctions between absolute prohibition (incest), relative prohibition (illicit acts), and permission (licit relations). Without this keystone, the whole edifice would collapse.

As might be expected, given the relationship of equivalence between the two spheres in the coercive model, a comparable situation pertains in the realm of alimentary consumption. The basic distinction here remains between the human family (or species) and other species. Alimentary acts are considered — once again, by patriarchal authority — to be cannibalistic when a person eats another creature with whom it is assumed the person possesses a blood relation. In this case, the control complex deems that the creature consumed must be another human being. In other words, the species solidarity so conspicuously denied in the sphere of sexuality suddenly assumes paramount importance. Such hypocrisy remains typical of the control mentality, for whom exigency and opportunism are key determinants of policy. On the other hand, however, alimentary acts are considered as non-cannibalistic when a person eats another creature with whom it is assumed — yet again, by patriarchal authority — the person possesses no blood relation. In this instance, the creature consumed can be practically anything **except** another human being. But again, as with sexuality, this basic binary distinction further breaks down into the familiar hierarchical pattern of tripartite distinctions: absolute prohibition (cannibalism), relative prohibition (proscribed consumption), and permis-

menstrual restrictions do not necessarily represent disgust or even a low status for women; they may be connected with the **mana** — the magic and fearful power of the blood itself” (Fisher 1980, p.157). Indeed: “Such taboos were originally restrictions made by women themselves — menstrual-hut customs — to protect their bodies and guarantee their sacred solitude during the moon functions, their separateness from men and children. But as male power structures and religious reactions against the Goddess rise, seeing the Great Mother more and more as the castrating other, the terrible devourer, these moon-blood taboos are given negative connotations” (Sjöö and Mor 1987, p.185). And the more authoritarian a society becomes, the stronger these negative menstrual taboos are made.

but through the experience of being gobbled up, of ecstatically surrendering to the sacred wilderness. Both grandmother and granddaughter are swallowed whole, and live within the belly of the wolf⁷ the womb of the mother — respectively, the cauldrons of digestive and procreative transformation. Due to their contiguity, these two functions are symbolically conflated: “The notion that pregnancy is the result of eating is still widespread among savages. Words for consuming and conceiving are often the same... The Bible’s term for birth is ‘coming forth from the bowels’ (Genesis 15:4), for, like children, the ancients were not altogether certain of the distinction between reproductive and digestive systems” (Walker 1983, p.135).

Nonetheless, the initiation process remains ecstatic in both the etymological and the contemporary meanings of the term.

The ritual scarification perceptible on the faces (and bodies) of some people from primal communities may represent the teethmarks made by the totemic animal while being eaten by it.

⁷ Walker suggests that the wolf was the “sacred totem of many European clans during the Middle Ages” and probably before: “Early medieval wolf clans... worshipped their totemic gods in wolf form, as did some people of the Greco-Roman world centuries earlier”. She also avers that the Red Riding Hood narrative is “traceable to wolf-clan tradition”. The reasons for this reverence were due to the fact that “the Great Goddess herself was a wolf” (Walker 1983, pp.1091,1068,1070). Duerr indicates that “Roman Diana, who later became one with Artemis, was also a goddess of wild animals. As the mistress of wolves, she ruled over all those who lived outside the social order: outlaws and strangers”. Artemis, deity of forests and wild nature, including wild beasts, was “an ancient women’s goddess” (Duerr 1987, pp.13,12) also revered by witches in later times. Zipes suggests that “The wolf was crucial in archaic thinking as a representative of the human wild side, of wilderness. He was more of a hazard of nature linked to sorcery and part of organic nature”, and proceeds to outline the contemporary significance of the wolf: “To recapture [read: recover] the wolf in us is part of a general counter-cultural movement against the nuclear extinction of the human species, made possible in the name of technological progress. As raw nature, the wolf is threatened by chemical pollution, scientific automation, and the general drive for scientific human perfection. This is why the wolf is no longer pictured as a real threat in radical adaptations of the traditional Red Riding Hood story” (Zipes 1983, pp.16,43).

In Greek, “**ekstasis** meant ‘standing forth naked’” (Walker 1983, p.269), and Red Riding Hood does precisely that. In some versions of the tale, the initiatory catechism (“What big eyes/ears/hands/ teeth you have... All the better to see/hear/ touch/ eat you with”), which stresses sensuous experience, accompanies the ritual stripping of the maid. As the latter removes each garment — symbolizing inhibitions, conditionings, repressions — she throws them into the fire, emblem of erotic passion, burning away the integuments of her old identity.⁸ The fiery consumption of these garments precedes her passionate consummation/ consumption on the bed.⁹

The initiatory process thus remains simultaneously alimentary and sexual. The figure of the wolf is also the grandmother. Freud was wrong about “the primal scene”. The father does not jealously devour his sons for fear that they will supplant him — both in the mother’s bed and as leader. Nor do the envious sons consume their father in order to supersede him. Rather, the (grand)mother lovingly devours her (grand)daughter in the assurance that she will continue ancient anarchic, shamanic traditions.¹⁰ Put another

⁸ On this issue Noble quotes Mary Daly: “Crone-logically prior to all discussions of political separatism from or within groups is the basic task of paring away, burning away the false selves encasing the Self, is the core of all authentic separations and thus is normative for all personal/political decisions about acts/forms of separatism (Noble 1983, p.79). Separatism here may be taken as a synonym for revolution. Crone-ology connotes Dreamtime.

⁹ One commentator attacks the notion that young primal people “gain sexual freedom through initiation”, suggesting that “among the peoples who have developed the most elaborate initiation rites, children enjoy such freedom all their lives, and the rites add nothing in this respect” (Bettelheim 1955, p.97). Transformational abilities — the freedom to transform oneself, not sexual freedom — are acquired through initiation. The mysteries transform consciousness — the child becomes an adult — and in the process teach the process of transformation. Through undergoing a single transformative experience, one learns how to undertake other transformations.

¹⁰ “According to Horace, the real primal scene was not the sexual drama postulated by Freud, but ‘A child by a fell witch devoured, dragged from her entrails,

of the control complex).³² Those relations which are deemed incestuous occur when an individual experiences sexual congress with a person to whom it is assumed — by the patriarch — that individual possesses a blood relation. Such relations are proscribed (or possibly reserved for the patriarch only). (The reasons for the suppression of incest lie in its anarchic capacities which were examined earlier.) On the other hand, non-incestuous relations are deemed to occur when an individual experiences a sexual relationship with a person to whom it is assumed again, by the patriarch — that individual possesses no blood relationship. But this basic division of sexual expression into proscribed and permitted forms soon becomes more complex. In order to tighten control over sexuality, the area of permitted acts is further divided into licit or illicit. Exactly which acts are defined as licit or illicit remains relative to context, and depends on various historical permutations of class, race, gender, ideology and so forth. But however liberal definitions of the licit may become, a constant remains the presence of negative ethical injunctions in other words, the law. Sexual morality — an official or unofficial arm of the law — squabbles over the placing of boundary lines, but does not question their legitimacy. For the fact remains that the prohibition of incest constitutes the often unacknowledged legitimization for all sexual regulation. The presence of the incest taboo — a term now construed, not to mean sacred and replete with **mana**, but forbidden and unclean³³ — reorders the sphere of

³² Arens rightly catches “a glimpse of the origin of incest in the reflection of the unique human capacity to generate rules”. He correctly asserts that “human culture created incest” (Arens 1986, pp.101,99) — but as a category, not (as he avers) as a practice. The degree of relatedness between partners in a sexual act remains immaterial in the anarchic model. It is only in the coercive model, with its rules and regulations, that it becomes an issue.

³³ Freud comments: “The meaning of ‘taboo’, as we see it, diverges in two contrary directions. To us it means, on the one hand, ‘sacred’, ‘consecrated’, and on the other ‘uncanny’, ‘dangerous’, ‘forbidden’, ‘unclean’” (Freud 1983, p.18). These divergent meanings are historically relative. “The widespread customs of

violation of a creature's inalienable right to life) are inadmissible in the sphere of alimentary consumption. Virtually unlimited sexual freedom, therefore, remains possible **because** of a voluntary limitation of alimentary possibility.

In contrast, the coercive model circumscribes possibilities in both spheres. Consanguinity emerges, not as a harmonizer, but as a demarcator of differences. The analogy between sexuality and alimentary consumption is pursued merely because it reinforces a felt need for the insertion of identical regulatory mechanisms within each sphere. Rather than complement one another, the two spheres possess a relationship of equivalence: they can, in typical hierarchical fashion, be superimposed over one another in order to create an interlocking, homogeneous structure of domination. Consanguinity functions as a means of carving up the previously unified spheres and aligning them in an appropriately coercive pattern. The control complex, a radically disconnected mentality, sharply delimits the ramifications of blood relationship.

In the sphere of sexuality, the latter remains limited to the family or clan; all other people are non-relatives, or members of other (possible heteronomous) clans.³¹ This basic division inserts a wedge into the sexual sphere. It divides the latter into the permissible and the impermissible (a sure sign of the presence

³¹ Cf. this remark by Van Gennep: "If... a people combines exogamy with totemism, this is because it has chosen to reinforce the social cohesion already established by totemism by superimposing on it yet another system which is connected with the first by its reference to physical and social kinship and is distinguished from, though not opposed to it, by its lack of reference to cosmic kinship. Exogamy can play this same part in types of society which are built on foundations other than totemism; and the geographical distribution of the two institutions coincides only at certain points in the world" (Lévi-Strauss 1966, p.109). Needless to say, the invasion of coercion, in various degrees and various manners, distorts integral totemic consciousness into the diverse partial, flawed forms endlessly examined by anthropologists.

way, the father does not (literally or symbolically) castrate his sons to ensure obedience and to prevent sexual — especially incestuous — expression. Instead, the (grand)mother releases her (grand)daughter's polymorphous sexuality and her capacity for total freedom. Her acts are thus necessarily both incestuous and cannibalistic — in other words, totemic, concerned with issues of consanguinity. "'Totem' means 'related through the mother'" (Sjöö and Mor 1987, p.80) — both the biological progenitrix and the Universal Mother of All.¹¹ Hence, the initiation experience imparts

and to life restored" (Walker 1983, p.135) — a version slightly patriarchally deformed, although essentially accurate.

¹¹ The emphasis on blood relationship appears even more explicitly in some versions of the tale, when the maid is deceived into drinking her grandmother's blood, thinking it to be wine, and eating her grandmother's flesh, thinking it to be meat. Consumption remains mutual in such versions.

Lévi-Strauss acknowledges the global dimensions of the incest-cannibalism-totem complex when he notes "the very profound analogy which people throughout the world seem to find between copulation and eating. In a very large number of languages they are even called by the same term. In Yoruba 'to eat' and 'to marry' are expressed by a single verb the general sense of which is 'to win, to acquire', a usage which has its parallel in French, where the verb 'consumer' applies both to marriage and to meals. In the language of the Koko Yao of Cape York Peninsula the word *kuta kuta* means both incest and cannibalism, which are the most exaggerated forms of sexual union and the consumption of food. For the same reason the eating of the totem and incest are expressed in the same way at Ponapy; among the Mashona and Matabele of Africa the word 'totem' also means 'sister's vulva', which provides indirect confirmation of the equivalence between eating and copulation" (Lévi-Strauss 196, p.105).

At this juncture, it might be useful to offer a conventional account of the phenomenon denoted by the term **totem**. The **Oxford English Dictionary** provides the following definition: "Among American Indians: The hereditary mark, emblem, or badge, of a tribe, clan, or group of Indians, consisting of a figure or representation of some animal, less commonly a plant or other natural object, after which the group is named; thus sometimes used to denote the tribe, clan, or division of a 'nation', having such a mark; also applied to the animal or natural object itself, sometimes considered to be ancestrally or fraternally related to the clan, being spoken of as a brother or sister, and treated as an object of friendly regard, or sometimes even as incarnating a guardian spirit who may be appealed to or worshipped... By anthropologists the name has been extended to

the realization that, given universal holistic interrelatedness,¹² all sexual acts are incestuous and all forms of consumption are cannibalistic.

Pleasure remains principal here. Through her shape shifting capacities, the grandmother becomes a figure of almost limitless sexual possibility. Polymorphous and androgynous, animal and human, female (crone) and male (wolf),¹³ bisexual and unashamedly incestuous (sexually initiating her granddaughter and often taking a kinsman, usually brother or son, as a consort), a conjoiner of the living and the dead – she represents erotic energy incarnate. Few permutations are beyond her scope.

But the conjunction of sexual and alimentary appetites remains far from fortuitous. For while sexual expression remains unlimited in its possibilities, alimentary ingestion must conform with physiological structure if cosmological equilibrium is not to be violated. In theory, practically anything could be consumed. In practice, however, omnivorousness precipitates vast dislocations on characterological, communal and ecological levels. Initiation forestalls this cataclysm by imparting a fundamental ethical

refer to other savage peoples and tribes, which (though they may not use token marks) are similarly divided into groups or clans named after animals, etc.; such animals, animal-names, or animal-named groups, being spoken or written of as their totems, and their organization, their complex system of mutual and marriage relations and religious usages, being styled TOTEMISM”.

¹² Commenting on the phrase “all my relatives”, the Amerindian shaman Leonard Crow Dog says: “That meant all two-legged ones, all four-legged ones, even those with fins, those with roots and leaves, everything alive, all our relatives” (Halifax 1980, p.82). Amerindian pipe ceremonies conclude with the participants asserting “We are all related”: “The act of smoking is a ritual communion with **everything** in creation, with every possibility of being”. “The Native American grasp of the **solidarity of life** is an expression of kinship and not a conviction of unity” (Highwater 1981, pp.189, 69).

¹³ “In many of the most ancient images of the Goddess, she is shown with both breasts and phallus, as hermaphroditic... Divine bisexuality stressed her absolute power – especially over her own sexuality, which was a spiritual as well as an emotional-physical expression” (Sjöö’and Mor 1987, p.67).

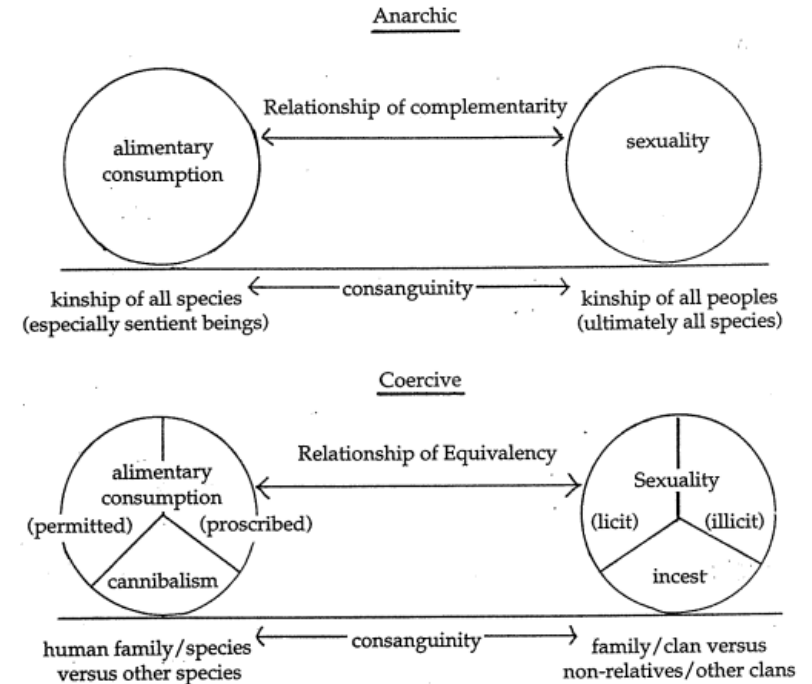


Figure I

The introduction of compulsion into the realm of sexual relations effectuates a profoundly negative transformation in the entire totemic system. This shift from an anarchic to a coercive model of psychosocial relations can be represented in diagrammatic form (figure I).³⁰ In both models, the “spheres” of sexuality and alimentary consumption are brought into relation through the paradigmatic metaphor of consanguinity. But here the resemblances end; for in the anarchic model consanguinity becomes a means of perceiving interconnexions between various elements, whereas in the coercive model it becomes a basis for establishing disjunctions between the very same units.

The recognition of universal consanguinity harmonizes the relationship between sexuality and alimentary consumption in the anarchic model. Consanguinity proposes a correspondence between a perceived kinship of all peoples (which arranges how humans sexually relate to one another, and to other species) and a perceived kinship of all species (which arranges how humans alimentally relate to one another and to other species). The entire model remains highly symmetrical and achieves a delicate equilibrium, with the two spheres maintained in a relationship of complementarity. Just as the sphere of sexuality possesses a centrifugal tendency, with the perceived kinship of all peoples inclined toward encompassing all species, so the sphere of alimentation possesses a centripetal tendency, with the perceived kinship of all species tapering toward its focal point of sentient beings. The motive power energizing this model remains pleasure — the mutual pleasure of all participants — which ultimately determines the nature of the transactions that may be made. Hence, to maximize pleasure, all relations which do not involve coercion are admissible in the sphere of sexuality. However, to minimize pain, all acts which involve coercion (particularly

³⁰ Diagrammatic representation and the use of spatial terminology inevitably implies that the two spheres of consumption and sexuality are distinct, when in fact they are clearly coterminous. Similarly, the use of spatial boundaries does not imply the actual existence of limitations in either “sphere”.

precept: Do as you will, but harm no others. The polarities of this categorical imperative — the so-called Golden Rule — are the etymologically-linked concepts of passion and compassion.¹⁴ In a severely attenuated form, this integral praxis remained current in ancient times: “Like the **devadasis** of Hindu temples, prostitute-priestesses dispensed the grace of the Goddess in ancient Middle-Eastern temples. They were often known as Charites or Graces since they dealt in their unique combination of beauty and kindness called **charis** (Latin **caritas**) that was later translated ‘charity’. Actually it was like Hindu **karuna**, a combination of mother-love, tenderness, comfort, mystical enlightenment, and sex” (Walker 1983, pp.819–20).¹⁵ But even this characterization constitutes a sharp decline from earlier eras, when **charis** was the perpetual basis of all conduct, and was dispensed to all beings, human and non-human, in whichever ways were appropriate. Red Riding Hood flourished during such times. For her, the animistic principle of **charis**, imbued through participation in the mysteries, liberates vitalistic pleasure and minimizes unnecessary pain, suffering and death. It also resides at the foundation of taboo and totemic practices, which formulate this visionary intuition in mnemonic devices for nonliterate peoples.

Totems are designed to promote, rather than impede, the flow of lifeforces. Certain potential food sources, particularly animal flesh, are set aside, or tabooed — not harmed, but preserved; not killed, but revered; not eaten, but embodied. To forgo these possible comestibles is regarded, not as an abnegation, but as a joy-

¹⁴ “In a true stage of illumination... one feels the universal compassion of unity with all sentient beings”, a condition which results in “a politics of Buddhist compassion in which the common suffering of all sentient beings leads to a more egalitarian vision of the commonweal” (Thompson 1981, pp.227,49), according to one commentator. But com/passionate consciousness remains nearer akin to a kind of passionate **ahisma** than the antisexual Buddhist variety.

¹⁵ Note the incestuous conjunction between mother-love and sexual relations in this characterization.

ous privilege; not as a punishment, but as a reward. The establishment of a taboo consecrates its subject, affirms its unique sacred status within the variegations of a vibrant, sacralized cosmos. Primal taboos do not prohibit the accursed, but celebrate the blessed scheme of universal anarchy. Derived from the dreams and visions of a collectivity and its members, they act as informal guidelines to conduct in a context of total freedom, a common fund of congenial lore in communities without laws. An equivalent term for “lore” is “way”, as in “lifeways”, and “Ways were always living ways; laws are not ways of free people. Laws are Leviathan’s ways” (Perlman 1983A, p.35).

In Rome, for example, “Originally there had been no Twelve Tables, nor any other Roman code of laws; there had been only oral tradition, based on instinctive good principles and particular magical announcements”. And this magically-informed oral tradition, or lore, was synonymous with poetic or mythic language: “Poetry in its archaic setting, in fact, was either the moral or religious law [read: lore] laid down for men by the nine-fold Muse, or the ecstatic utterance of man in furtherance of this law and in glorification of the Muse”. Graves insists upon using the word “law” because of the etymological derivation he accords to it, but his account of the decline into legalism makes more sense if regarded as the replacement of lore by law, or of spirituality by religion: “It must be explained that the word **lex**, ‘law’, began with the sense of a ‘chosen word’, or magical pronouncement, and that, like **lictor**, it was later given a false derivation from **ligare**. Law in Rome grew out of religion: occasional pronouncements developed proverbial force and became legal principles. But as soon as religion in its primitive sense [read: spirituality] is interpreted as social obligation and defined by tabulated laws — as soon as Apollo the Organizer, God of Science, usurps the power of his Mother the Goddess of inspired truth, wisdom and poetry, and tries to bind her devotees by laws — inspired magic goes, and what remains is theology, ec-

cates regarding contemporary male responses to incestuous experience: “The salient point about [such] men... is that they are not crying out against the seduction of the innocent; no accusations are being made that sex with a mother, older sister, or aunt had broken a life. **These men are rapturous...** In the earlier chapters we spoke of one of the forms men’s basic conflict takes [in patriarchal conditions]: the split of love vs. lust, and the consequent division of women into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ figures. For these men, there is no such division. One woman is both love and lust.” Love and lust, or passion and compassion — these are the two poles of **charis**, integrated through incest, which the control complex aims to sunder and polarize, exalting obedience to one and demanding suppression of the other, thus creating the first hierarchy, the prototypical paradigm of control. Within the community of women, incest does not become abusive or smothering, but nurturing. “**It is not the physical fact of sex that matters so much as the psychological message the parent [sibling or kin] imparts along with the erotic experience**” (Friday 1980, p.162).²⁹ And for males and females (including Red Riding Hood), the message imparted through initiation remains the presence and preeminent importance of cherishing — cherishing life in all its multiple forms and in all its polymorphous pleasures. The control complex, however, ravages this network of integrating metaphors, and replaces tenderness with terror.

²⁹ “In addition to being a feature of human culture in a broad sense, incest, in the form of an institutionalized relationship in a particular society, has the responsibility of transmitting specific cultural messages... a main concern of the deed is with the transmission of profound cultural messages about what it means to be human” (Arens 1986, pp.122,137).

By this point, it should have become apparent that references to incest should not be interpreted in the contemporary sense of abuse and coercion. In the present context, incest could be termed “matristic uncest” in that it connotes incestuous acts which are non-exploitative and non-abusive because they take place under the auspices of the community of women — a guarantor of their beneficent nature.

p.2).²⁸ Freud projects civilized concerns onto primitives here, but his patriarchal ancestors were under no such illusions regarding their psychological motivations. They instituted a system of total control designed to eradicate multivalent sexuality, and incestuous relations in particular. In the process they created the most monstrous aberration of all time — the exaltation of abjection, a craving for coercion and authority. The control forces perversely deform everything into its opposite so that those acts most ardently desired are made to seem loathsome and defiling, while the most abhorrent acts, previously regarded as disgusting and hateful, appear as enticing because permissible. The allure of incest, its **mana**, must be broken at all costs, regardless of the atrocities inflicted on the way. And first of all, its attraction for men — those who sympathise with the community of women — must be violently suppressed.

The control complex aims to replace anarchy with coercion, or **mana** (a form of innate empowerment based on universal interrelatedness) with power (a structure which effects subjugation through disconnection and dissociation). To achieve this purpose, it must first shatter individuals' sense of psychic wholeness, and then commit them to making erotic investments in the fragmentation process — thus ensuring that decimation assumes a perpetual character. Women, through their direct involvement in blood mysteries, are difficult, though not impossible, targets for this process. But men, because of their indirect, mediated relation with the mysteries through the community of women, are more vulnerable. Their psychic integrity depends upon continued participation in the incestuous rites of the female group. As Nancy Friday indi-

²⁸ After discussing what he considers as the obsessive primitive avoidance of incest, Freud rather ironically remarks: "It must strike us as all the more puzzling to hear that those same savages practise sacred orgies, in which precisely those forbidden degrees of kinship seek sexual intercourse — puzzling, that is, unless we prefer [sic!] to regard the contrast as an explanation of the prohibition" (Freud 1983, p.11). At this juncture the threadbare nature of his contentions becomes quite apparent.

clesiastical ritual, and negatively ethical behaviour" (Graves 1986, pp.479,447).¹⁶

Another synonym for lore or spirituality, and one which subsumes them both, is **taboo**. The differences between law and taboo (in its archaic sense) are particularly acute. Significantly, "the very word taboo, from Polynesian **tapua**, 'sacred, magical', applied specifically to menstrual blood" (Walker 1983, p.644). A taboo was broken when a wrong was committed against universal interrelatedness, that ubiquitous consanguinity which the menses typify. But laws, founded on the organization of unrelatedness, are infringed when attempts (some authentic, others wrongheaded or perverted) are made to reestablish a sense of interconnectedness. Furthermore, in contrast to the externally imposed coercions characteristic of all legal systems, "the primitive punishment for the breach of a taboo is ordained not by the judges of the tribe but by the transgressor himself, who realizes his error and either dies of shame and grief or flees to another tribe and changes his identity... his breach of taboo was left to his own sense of divine vengeance" (Graves 1986, p.478). The Erinys, or avenger, did not assume the form of a terroristic law enforcer, but an interiorized crone figure, somewhat resembling Red Riding Hood's grandmother. Walker refers to "the Celtic Goddess Rhiannon, the same Earth Mother who ate her own children. Often her Night-Mare character was a personification of conscience, for the Goddess sent ominous dreams to warn or to torment those who broke her laws [read: lore]" (Walker 1985, p.87).

Primal communities did not need police forces to maintain law and order. The ethical principle of **charis** provided sufficient scope for most behaviour. And sacred clowns burlesqued any individuals

¹⁶ "The word **lictor** then became popularly connected with the word **religare**, 'to bind', because it was a lictorial function to bind those who rebelled against the power of the Consuls" (Graves 1986, p.479). Tellingly, a term which denotes binding rebels against authority (**religare**) appears at the root of words denoting law (**lex**) and religion (**religio**).

who became offensively authoritarian. “As the policeman and the executioner represent authority in the stark reality of the West, the sacred clown represents authority in the metaphoric world of primal society... The thrust of the ego in the individual is so slight a threat to public life... that common gossip and ceremonialized ridicule are sufficient to keep people living together harmoniously”. Moreover, “Since primal society is inclusive rather than exclusive, since it recognizes everything in nature as natural, there is therefore an appropriate place for all behavior within the tribal structure — though many forms of behavior might be considered peculiar and perhaps undesirable in other societies” (Highwater 1981, pp.179,180,174).

Implicit in totemic consciousness as it has been adumbrated above remains a deeply ingrained ethical sensibility. And the **experience** of ritual initiation constituted the central means through which this sensibility was assimilated.¹⁷ So exactly what occurred in these initiation ceremonies, these “Hekate suppers” (Noble 1983, p.78)¹⁸ or Lupercalia (festivals of the She-Wolf) which created such profound effects?

Inevitably some compelling conjunction of sexual and alimentary acts must have taken place. In sexual terms, incestuous relations between grandmother and granddaughter occurred. Neces-

¹⁷ “In the experience of initiation through which the shaman passes, the mythic images woven into a society’s fabric suddenly become not only apparent but often enacted and made bodily visible and relevant for all. The initiatory crisis and the experience of death and resurrection, then, do not represent a rending of the individual from his or her social ground. Rather, they are a deepening of the patterns that compose the sacred, ahistorical territory that supports the more superficial and transient aspects of human culture. The direction that the psyche takes as a result of the crisis is not circumscribed or curtailed by society. Rather, the human spirit is oriented toward the cosmos, the ground of being is the universe, and the life field is therefore amplified to include all dimensions of Unconcealed Being” (Halifax 1980, p.18).

¹⁸ Hekate was mother of the witches and the crone aspect of Diana/Artemis.

mentality — those between mother and child, and other close relations.

Here, the quintessential patriarchal complaint achieves articulation. Women are condemned because they commit incest — systematically with their children, and indiscriminately with other close relatives. They are guilty, not merely of embodying heterogeneity, but of commingling the heterogeneous with the homogeneous, polluting and causing complicity amongst the latter. They dissolve all disjunctions through their emphasis on universal interrelatedness. They stress consanguinity in order to interfuse or form analogies between its elements, whereas patriarchs want to use it as a basis for making divisions and differentiations.

Thus, when patriarchal hoodlums forcibly disperse female communities and enslave their inhabitants, they impose a rigid grid of distinctions over sexual relations. Hetaerism (from **hetairismos**, the Greek word for companion) is replaced by heterosexuality — a term whose prefix derives from the same root, but which is now construed to mean “other, different”. Sexuality can no longer indiscriminately blend individuals in any permutation desired by mutual participants, irrespective of their degree of kinship. Sexual relations must now take place with an other — e.g., a member of the opposite sex, a member of a different family — and a single other it must remain. Sexuality becomes reified, a dialogue between two separate objects, two deracinated monads.

At the origins of civilization lies what Freud called “the horror of incest”, although the ideas on this subject he ascribes to primitives are clearly more applicable to the civilized: “They set before themselves with the most scrupulous care and the most painful severity the aim of avoiding incestuous sexual relations. Indeed, their whole social organization seems to serve that purpose or to have been brought into relation with its attainment” (Freud 1983,

tion. Control depends on the establishment of order, a systematization of obedience. Organization must be imposed on chaos, artificial rules must replace natural harmony. And the community of women constituted the very matrix of primal anarchy. All attempts at patriarchal classification were frustrated amidst its disordered profusion. Even the basic facts of kinship and filiation — elements essential to the institution of racial and dynastic lineages — are obscured there or at best remain at the discretion of female taciturnity. The practice of hetaerism removes all genealogical certainties except maternity. Polymorphous sexuality compounds the confusion by rendering erotic pleasure autonomous — or semi-autonomous — from procreation (whereas to the patriarchal mind the two remain indistinguishable in ejaculation); it emphasises the purely pleasurable function of the clitoris against the more reproductively functional pleasures of the penis; and, rather than confine gratification to heterosexual intercourse, it encourages an eroticization of all relations, including — most damningly in the view of the patriarchal

intuition, and gives rise to a geometry. Although our theoretical description of the **chora** is itself part of the discourse of representation that offers it as evidence, the **chora**, as rupture and articulations (rhythm), precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality and temporality. Our discourse — all discourse — moves with and against the **chora** in the sense that it simultaneously depends upon and refuses it. Although the **chora** can be designated and regulated, it can never be definitely posited: as a result, one can never give it axiomatic form... Neither model nor copy, the **chora** precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm... The theory of the subject proposed by the theory of the unconscious will allow us to read in this rhythmic space, which has no thesis and no position, the process by which signifiante is constituted. Plato himself leads us to such a process when he calls this receptacle or **chora** nourishing and maternal, not yet unified in an ordered whole because deity is absent from it. Though deprived of unity, identity, or deity, the **chora** is nevertheless subject to a regulating process [réglementation], which is different by temporarily effectuating them and then starting over, again and again... The mother's body is... what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic **chora**" (Kristeva 1984, pp.25–27 *passim*).

sarily these acts must have been lesbian in character.¹⁹ The rea-

¹⁹ Such an assertion may seem incredible, but such acts are only an intensification of practices known to occur in primal communities. One commentator indicates that female elders teach young girls in their charge erotic enhancement techniques, including masturbation (Bettelheim 1955, pp.258–9). Another suggests that “rules governing sexual intercourse, methods of preventing conception, and finally love magic” were imparted during “feminine initiation” (Neumann 1955, p.291). And certainly, among the Picts, “a Lesbian/bisexual sisterhood was entrusted with the guardianship of their tribe’s secret powers and visions” (Sjöö and Mor 1987, p.68). Compare also the following account of part of the ritual initiation of a young female Mapuche shaman by older shaman women. “The candidate undresses to her undergarments and lies down on a couch where an old **machi** or shaman rubs her with camelo and makes passes over her body. According to Alfred Metraux, the elder women bend over the initiate and suck her breasts, belly, and head with such force that blood is drawn” (Halifax 1982, p.22). Here, in this Chilean rite, the administering of the lovebite, mark of com/passional consciousness, remains explicit.

For those who continue to shy away from this vision of lesbianic incest, however, some consolation can be offered in the form of qualifications deriving from the issue of social parenting. In varying ways, different authorities aver that in primal contexts, characterized by close communal interaction, biological parents are less important to a child than the collective parentage. One author suggests: “In the context of communal living arrangements, the children defined all resident adults as social parents and vice versa” (Arens 1986, p.57). Another writer intimates: “Many versions of the extended family in which children are communally raised exist. Sometimes all women of a certain relationship are called ‘mother’, all men ‘father’, though the child usually knows who is its real mother, if not necessarily its father” (Fisher 1980, p.110). And a third critic asserts regarding Australian aboriginals: “a man uses the term ‘father’ not only for his actual procreator but also for all the other men whom his mother might have married according to tribal law and who therefore might have procreated him; he uses the term ‘mother’ not only for the woman who actually bore him but also for all the other women who might have borne him without transgressing tribal law; he uses the terms ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ not only for the children of his actual parents but also for the children of all those persons who stand in the relation of parents to him in the classificatory sense; and so on. Thus the kinship terms which two Australians apply to each other do not necessarily indicate any consanguinity, as ours would do: they represent social rather than physical relationships” (Freud 1983, pp.6–7). Given this degree of fluidity in terms of identity and relationships, it remains difficult to locate incest semantically — it pervades the entire field.

sons for such relations are not difficult to recover. By making love with each other, the grandmother and granddaughter reenact the ultimate scene of cosmic creation. “The most ancient myths made the primal couple not a Goddess and a God, but a Goddess and a Serpent. The Goddess’s womb was a garden of paradise in which the serpent lived” (Walker 1983, p.642). And the Serpent, although subsequently construed by early patriarchal thinkers into a phallic symbol, was initially female (perhaps symbolising the umbilical cord which unites mother and child in the womb): “In line with its uroboric hybrid nature, the snake may also appear as feminine”. The Goddess, as primeval chaos, parthenogenetically generated the serpent, made love with her offspring, and engendered the universe (or **kosmos**, holistic harmony) from the swirls of ensuing erotic energy.²⁰ This creative act is symbolised by the uroboros:

The intellectually timid may therefore take comfort in the fact that, in patriarchal terms, Red Riding Hood and the crone may not be literally related. From the perspective of universal interrelatedness, of course, this distinction remains entirely immaterial. But it should be noted that “the incest prohibition is not universal, since the very concept is culture-bound... it is not possible to conclude that there is anything resembling a uniform response to violation of what we call incest taboo. Some societies are very tolerant of or oblivious to such behaviour, express no collective horror, while others take drastic action in cases of sexual relations between individuals to which we would have no objection” (Arens 1986, pp.5–6).

Furthermore, “The custom [in antiquity] of lifting the incest rule on the day of the ‘Great Mother’, may be a memory of those days when the ‘dying’ in the womb of the earth represented incest with the mother” — a clear indication that incest constituted a major component of female initiation. (And not only incest, but cannibalism too: paleolithic initiation caves were simultaneously vaginas and mouths in which neophytes were sexually and alimentally devoured.) However, such acts were not necessarily identified as incestuous: “the act of insight gained through initiation was at the same time also an act of love, which would have represented incest with the mother if at the place of origin incest itself had not dissolved together with the barriers to incest. There is no sin at the place of origin. Where there are no longer any norms, no norms can be violated” (Dierr 1985, pp.25,42).

²⁰ “Everywhere in world myth and imagery, the Goddess-Creatrix was coupled with the sacred serpent” (Sjöö and Mor 1987, p.57). But in some versions the

coercion and control). “Myths record the transition from loose, flexible marital arrangements favored by the Goddess to the rigid monogamy favored by the Gods”. Insurgent patriarchal forces, the incipient control complex, replaced freedom with coercion. In particular, they introduced rigid distinctions within the sphere of sexual relations. Marriage was formalized and assigned a central position. Monogamy was prioritized and became increasingly compulsory — at least for women. The reasons for the invasion of compulsion into the sphere of sexual relations, and thence into all spheres of life, remains readily apparent. Beforehand, paternity remained unimportant and practically indeterminate within hetaerism. “Before recognition of physical fatherhood, and even for a long time after it, most people viewed a mother’s brother as a child’s nearest relative, because he was united with the mother and the mother’s mother by the all-important blood bond... Fathers were of no significance in family relationships” (Walker 1983, pp.587,1026) and often remained unknown. Not only were fathers irrelevant, but the entire patriarchal family structure as currently constituted was absent.

The fundamental kinship group remained the community of women with their youthful offspring. And this solidary group, the source of female **mana**, with its support network of sympathetic males,²⁷ constituted the primary obstacle to patriarchal domina-

²⁷ “For both women and men there is a close identification with the collective group of mothers, with Mother Earth, and with the Cosmic Mother” during archaic eras. “The collective of mothers, identified with by both daughters and sons, was made up of strong, creative, protective, sexually free, and visionary women” (Sjöö and Mor 1987, p.67).

The notion of the “community of women” need not be interpreted literally. This term can be taken to connote the Platonic **chora** or mother and receptacle of all, particularly as it is appropriated by Julia Kristeva. “We borrow the term **chora** from Plato’s **Timaeus** to denote an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases. We differentiate this uncertain and indeterminate articulation from a **disposition** that already depends on representation, lends itself to phenomenological, spatial

must be subject to searching scrutiny and placed within a critical perspective.

In the terms “endogamy” and “exogamy”, “gamy” refers to marriage (Greek **gameo**). In endogamic systems one must marry within a clan unit, whereas in exogamic systems one remains obliged to marry outside the clan unit. Generally speaking, in both systems, communities are divided into totem clans, membership of a particular group determining whom one may marry: in endogamy one must take a mate from the same totem clan, in exogamy one must take a mate from a different clan. Basically, such systems determine with whom one may procreate – i.e., with whom one may copulate for reproductive purposes. This cluster of ideas betrays a set of values – particularly the presence of coercion and the neurotic obsession with procreation – which remain alien to totemic consciousness **in its pristine condition**. As indicated earlier, for primal people heterosexual intercourse constituted only one hue in the spectrum of erotic possibilities. Primal communities were originally characterized by hetaerism, or open communal “marriage”, within which unfettered polymorphous eroticism remained the norm. “Matriarchal societies seldom permitted sexual jealousy. Women were free to change lovers or husbands, to make polyandrous or group marriages”. During this era, “there was no formal marriage” (Walker 1983, pp.587,820), and mutual desires determined the form, nature and duration of gender identities and carnal permutations. In such a context, notions of endogamy and exogamy are inappropriate and unnecessary. They are clearly the product of a later age, and Freud surely remains correct when he endorses the notion that “as regards the chronological relations between the two institutions, most of the authorities agree that totemism is the older of them and that exogamy [and hence also endogamy] arose later” (Freud 1983, p.121).

The rise of the endogamy-exogamy dyad corresponds with the development of patriarchy (or comparable tendencies toward

“The uroboros, the circular snake biting its tail, is the symbol of the beginning, of the original situation, in which man’s consciousness and ego were still small and undeveloped. As symbol of the origin and of the opposite contained within it, the uroboros is the ‘great Round’, in which positive and negative, male and female, elements of consciousness, elements hostile to consciousness, and unconscious elements are intermingled. In this sense the uroboros is also a symbol of a state in which chaos, the unconscious, and the psyche as a whole were undifferentiated – and which is experienced by the ego as a borderline state” (Neumann 1955, pp.144, 19).

The uroboros, often abstractly represented as a circle, denotes primal anarchy, the zero, the beginning, the matrix of metaphor, the orgasmic vowel of creative activity. Contemporary anarchists reemphasise this meaning by placing an A – the alpha, the initial vowel – inside it. But the uroboros also represents the omega, the long O which ends the Greek alphabet, the last howl, the cry

Goddess also transforms herself into a snake to engender the cosmic or world-egg. “The creation of the world... resulted from the sexual act performed between the Great Goddess and the World-Snake Ophion” (Graves 1986, p.248). Later, when Ophion was interpreted as male, the image of the two coupling snakes – figured in the caduceus – led to the idea of the male snake-god being sexually/alimentally devoured by the serpent-goddess. “The image of the male snake deity enclosed or devoured by the female gave rise to a superstitious notion about the sex lives of snakes, reported by Pliny and solemnly believed in Europe even up to the 20th century: that the male snake fertilizes the female snake by putting his head in her mouth and letting her eat him” (Walker 1983, p.904). Even this patriarchally impaired version of matristic cosmogony retains the link between sexuality and alimentation.

But initially the world-snake was evidently female. “The ageless serpent was originally identified with the Great Goddess herself... She was... Kundalini, the inner female soul of man in serpent shape, coiled in the pelvis, induced through proper practice of yoga to uncoil and mount through the spinal **chakras** toward the head, bringing infinite wisdom... Egypt agreed with India in depicting the first serpent as a totemic form of the Great Mother herself.” The Goddess and the serpent represent the two aspects of the “dual Moon-goddess of life and death” (Walker 1983, pp.903–4).

of death and consummation, the “Crone’s letter, the horseshoe-shaped omega, which means literally ‘great Om’” (Walker 1985, p.81). In my beginning is my end, as the circled A typifies, testifying to anarchy’s dynamic attempt to synthesise primal beginnings with advanced ends.

The uroboros remains simultaneously cannibalistic and incestuous. As a serpent biting its own tail, it cannibalistically consumes life, just as life eats life to survive, and death eats life so that life may continue. As the Goddess, making love to herself in the form of her offspring, it incestuously ensures the continuity of generation. The cyclical round of birth-death-rebirth, figured in the lives of individuals, the phases of the Moon, the shifting seasons, and multitudinous other forms, remains at the centre of female initiation ceremonies. Regenerative cycles are reaffirmed by the alimentary/ sexual coupling of the maturing, fertile girl and the declining, barren crone.

The central ritual act was the mutual genital kiss, of which our kiss on the lips remains a mere token. “Like most forms of affectionate contact, the kiss was an adaptation of primitive mother/ child behavior. The original Sanskrit word was **cusati**, ‘he sucks’. Gestures of embrace, clutching to the bosom, began as imitations of the nursing mother. Scholars believe kissing originated in the mouth-to-mouth feeding, practiced amongst ancient Greeks and others as a form of love play. In Germany and Austria even up to the 19th century AD it was common for mothers to pre-masticate food and feed it to their infants by ‘kissing’. Kissing was most common in European countries, where it was supposed to create a bond among all members of a clan (hence, ‘kissing cousins’). It was virtually unknown in northern Asia (Japan, China, Mongolia). Amerindians and Eskimos did not kiss but rather inhaled the breath of a loved one by ‘rubbing noses’”. (Walker 1983, pp. 508–9).

The act of kissing, in its primal context, links incest and cannibalism, food and sex (a connexion intimated, among other ways,

the age of gold was content with the fruits of trees and the crops that spring forth from the soil, and did not defile the mouth with blood” (Eisler 1951, p.28).

But these apparent limitations in terms of consumption are compensated for during the time of the Dreaming by an unparalleled latitude in sexual expression. The usual terms invoked concerning the latter subject are endogamy and exogamy. In the present context, however, these concepts become somewhat problematic. On the one hand, an initiate realizes that, given universal interrelatedness, all sexual relations are perforce incestuous and thus necessarily endogamous. But, on the other hand, in the eras of the Dreaming, the basic communal group was not the generic tribal unit, but the community of women – a community necessarily exogamic in character: “Exogamy reveals two essential characteristics: first the cohesion of the female group of grandmother, mother, daughter, and children, vehicles of the matriarchal psychology and of the mysteries characterized by the primordial relation between mother and daughter; second the ‘expulsion’ of the males, the sons, who live on the margin of the female group with which they are sexually associated” (Neumann 1955, p.270). In other words, for primal women, sexual relations are by nature endogamous, yet because they inhabit a group which excludes (or more exactly sequesters) men, they must – if they are to take heterosexual mates – form relations which are perforce exogamic. Such a contradiction indicates that this terminology

those perils which arise from the fact that we, hunting animals as we do, live by slaying other souls. Therefore they had no shamans”. In those times, “everyone was a physician, and there was no need of any shamans”: “There were no shamans in those days, and men were ignorant of all those rules of life which have since taught them to be on their guard against danger and wickedness”. Evil, law and the shaman as specialist and appeaser of hostile slaughtered animal spirits all originate when one individual, “the first shaman” (Halifax 1980, pp.164–5 **passim**), inaugurates the killing of game in order to end a famine. The development of a priesthood, and hence the entire control complex, remains implicit in this act.

additional metaphoric accretions, but true mantic consciousness finds expression and embodiment in everyday acts.

In communal life, consanguinity remains the locus of totemic and taboo practices, which in turn harmonize the interlinked issues of food and sex. And so the sensibility acquired during initiation possesses a central significance in this area. During initiation, an individual experiences the process of being eaten, and through this experience recognizes the interrelatedness of all things. All acts of consumption, including but by no means limited to the eating of human flesh, are revealed as cannibalistic. But this knowledge indicates a particularly powerful affiliation between humans and sentient creatures — those animals whose consciousness identifies them as cousins to humanity. As Lévi-Strauss explains, “The **atua** [sacred lifeforces] appear to men in the form of animals, never of plants. Food tabus... apply to animals, not plants. The relations of the gods to vegetable species is symbolic, that to animal species is real” (Lévi-Strauss 1963, p.29). To the pantheistic perspective, all things are animate, but sentient creatures are especially endowed with lifeforce, and hence particularly closely related to humankind.²⁵ Thus, **originally**, at the **fons et origo** of human existences, primal people refrained from eating their animal relatives, regarding flesh-eating as disgustingly cannibalistic.²⁶ As Ovid indicates: “That ancient age which we call

²⁵ Leonardo Da Vinci understood the basis of this distinction: “Though nature has given sensibility to pain to such living organisms as have the power of movement — in order thereby to preserve the members which in this movement are liable to diminish and be destroyed — the living organisms which have no power, consequently do not need to have a sensibility to pain; and so it comes about that, if you break them, they do not feel anguish in their members as do the animals” (Eisler 1951, p.193).

²⁶ “The taboos on animals, which consist essentially of prohibitions against killing and eating them, constitute the nucleus of **Totemism**” (Freud 1983, p.23).

An illuminating Eskimo narrative relates how this people’s ancestors “got their food from the earth, they lived on the soil. They knew nothing of all the game we now have, and had therefore no need to be ever on guard against all

in the contemporary slang term for cunnilingus, “eating”).²¹ And the reasons for this linkage are not difficult to discover. Amongst primal peoples, the mother-child relationship remains thoroughly eroticised, from birth onwards: “Even parturition may not always be painful, as is usual among us; Niles Newton argues that in societies where sexual attitudes are not puritanical, it is less arduous, and she finds parallels between uterine contractions of orgasm and those of childbirth”. Orgasmic childbearing leads to an extended period of mutually pleasurable suckling: “In peasant and primitive societies babies are nursed not for the six months usual with us, but for periods of from two to four years. This is done not only as a birth-control measure but also because it is a sensually pleasing experience for mother and child”. For the mother, “the sensation of nursing is another kind of orgasm”. But for the child too eroticism pervades the relationship: “In many societies it is normal for the mother to caress her baby’s genitals during nursing... We can hardly imagine an American mother engaging in labial, clitoral, or penis stimulation of her infant without guilt or social condemnation, yet this is an accepted and expected pattern in many societies where mothering and sexuality are closely linked” (Fisher 1979, pp.37–8 **passim**).

Thus, for both mother and child, primal lactation synthesises alimantation and sexuality, cannibalism and incest. In initiation rituals, however, the comestibles to be consumed were not mother’s milk (given the deliberate absence of the maternal figure), nor pre-masticated food, but menstrual blood. Walker provides many examples of ancient rituals which revolved around the consumption of semen and/ or menses, including agapes practised by Ophite Chris-

²¹ The kiss completes the uroboros, the symbol of anarchy. Conjoin this emphasis on the kiss with the fact that “if one needs a single, simple name for the Great Goddess, Anna is the best choice” (Graves 1986, p.372), and immediately an apt appellation for proponents of anarchy becomes apparent. The Goddess of Chaos and I have kissed: therefore, I am an “Anna-kissed”. (As a palindrome, **Anna** — like **Eve** — lexically reproduces the uroboros.)

tians, and comments: “Medieval churchmen insisted that the communion wine drunk by witches was menstrual blood, and they may have been right” (Walker 1983, p.637). The menses are consumed in an act of incestuous cannibalism. The grandmother absorbs the fertile fluid which promises an access of creative powers and ultimate rebirth. In turn, at the close of the initiation rite the granddaughter will be reborn from the womb/ belly of the she-wolf. For now, however, like the Goddess in her primeval state, she feeds on her own creativity.

But alongside these fertility aspects of the rite, there are the issues of erotic pleasure as innately desirable. As indicated earlier, primal peoples clearly understood the distinction between sexuality and reproduction. And so, as an act of creative paradox, a rite marking the onset of fecundity offsets its reproductive facets with an experience of intense yet non-procreative sexual relations. As an option lesbianism makes erotic and symbolic sense for women “given the female’s broad range of sexual possibility, our animal inheritance, combined with the human brain which elaborates on this heritage. We all loved our mothers first” (Fisher 1979, p.43).²²

Mutual cunnilingus reconstitutes the identical circle of “uroboric incest” and of the “alimentary uroboros” (Neumann 1955, pp. 34, 182). But it also sets up a direct circuit between the metaphorically-linked organs of belly and womb through their respective orifices, the mouth and the vulva: “‘Mouth’ comes from the same root as ‘mother’ — Anglo-Saxon **muth**, also related to the Egyptian Goddess Mut. Vulvas have **labias**, ‘lips’, and many...

²² Intimacy and close identity with the collectivity of women remained “conducive to bisexuality in both sexes” during archaic eras. Lesbianism was based “on the daughter’s desire to reestablish union with the Mother, and with her own femaleness”, and typified women of the period: “the further back one goes in time the more bisexual, or gynandrous, is the Great Mother. As Charlotte Wolff says in **Love Between Women**, perhaps the present-day Lesbian woman is the closest in character to ancient women” (Sjöo and Mor 1987, p.67).

believed that behind the lips lie teeth” (Walker 1983, p.1035).²³ The initiate’s vaginal lips emerge at the moment she becomes capable of maternity. Lips caress lips in the kiss of mutual cunnilingus, and such mouthing remains a root definition of the mother. “The positive femininity of the womb appears as a mouth; that is why ‘lips’ are attributed to the female genitals, and on the basis of this positive symbolic equation the mouth, as ‘upper womb’, is the birthplace of the breath and the word, the Logos. Similarly, the destructive [to the ego] side of the Feminine, the destructive and deadly womb, appears most frequently in the archetypal form of a mouth bristling with teeth” (Neumann 1955, p.1 68). The mouth consumes and destroys, the vulva produces and creates. Part of the same cycle, life and death intermingle — joyously in matristic thought, obscenely in perverted patriarchal fantasy. This image symbolizes the crux of the blood mysteries.

The key theme of female initiation thus remains the issue of consanguinity. Through the experience of initiation, the maid acquires a sensuous, bodily awareness of the metaphorical ramifications of this crucial topic. In other words, she procures a corporeal mnemotechny, a physical knowledge of interconnect-edness: in her flesh, in her bones remains a memory, a wisdom that can never be forgotten.²⁴ Mnemonic devices such as totem poles and mythopoeic narratives may serve to prevent lapses of memory, to encapsulate communal knowledge, or record

²³ The word **vulva** may well share a common etymological root with **vulvus** (wolf), indicating a special correspondence between devouring animal and devouring female genitalia.

The term **myth**, meaning oral communication, also derives from the same etymological root as mother and mouth. A myth is a tale originating in the mouth of a mother.

²⁴ “Much of the ‘art’ of American Indians is not art in the formal Western sense at all, but the careful representation of the iconography given to a person during a vision quest, or given in the dreams of later life”. Such images are “secret pores into a knowledge that lay in the memories — in the bodies — of a whole people and not in their signs or writings” (Highwater 1981, pp.86,75).

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mythography and the semiotics of culture

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mirror each other exactly, must be not of the opposite but of the same sex. Hence, the daughter is cast out entirely, and the anthropologically notorious struggles between the sacred king (or hero) and his tanist (who possibly once represented the goddess's champion, the mother's brother) commence.

But even before this stage an important change in the character of these mythic transactions had occurred. Once, the hero had fought the serpent or dragon-daughter to win the favours of the goddess. Increasingly, however, the goddess becomes not the determinant of the conflict but the prize gained by the victor. Andromeda becomes the helpless victim chained to the rock, awaiting her deliverance from evil by the brave hero.

The introduction of the king/ tanist pattern reinforces this tendency. The victor — sometimes a divine patriarchal child who slayed both hero and tanist — is no longer the consort of the goddess, but her spouse, and from that vantage point it is only a short step to becoming her lord and master, thence her god and even her creator. The tanist figure helps in this respect too. The introjection of an additional male element facilitates the proliferation of a whole range of deified heroes — or gods who arrogates to themselves various aspects and functions of the previously integral goddess. Thus dismembered, the latter is downgraded to a mere constituent of the classical pantheon — in which she is sometimes assigned the role of daughter — while her erstwhile partner is elevated to the position of Father-god.

From this Olympian perspective it is easy for the god to absorb the masculinized fragments of the goddess and thus become the patriarchal monotheistic God, a supreme deity beyond or above — indeed, outside — the creation he rules, and thus out of the reach of death. In this way, the entire character of the cosmos is mythically inverted, and the dispensation of **mana** is replaced by the rule of power.

The Red Riding Hood tale participates in this iconotropic shift, as myth becomes narrative, and dreamtime becomes history. The

story unfolds during a period in which insurgent patriarchal forces are accelerating their assault on the forest, its sacred groves, its mysteries, and its inhabitants, both animal and human. The increasingly distended settlements are becoming dangerous places for devotees of the goddess, and the forest provides a diminishing site of refuge.⁴⁶ In some versions of the tale, the wolf refrains from gobbling up the maiden in the open because of the proximity of woodcutters. Already women's mysteries are being forced underground — they can no longer be practised in the sacred groves, but only in the isolated seclusion of sites like the grandmother's cottage. Men like the woodcutters do not seek initiation into the labyrinthine mysteries, but to pervert and destroy them. "The hero enters the labyrinth not to be initiated and therefore lose his will, but to kill the mysteries — as in the Minotaur myth: the hero enters, but retains his sense of individuality [i.e., egohood], and returns as a conqueror" (Neumann 1955, p.177). This repudiation of regeneration remains characteristic of the patriarch figure in the Red Riding Hood tale.

⁴⁶ Incipient control forces, implementing their regime in civilizing areas, were clearly subject to defections by disaffected elements. The latter, needed to operate the developing machine of domination, fled to the forest to escape enslavement. Two of William Blake's visionary poems, "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found", indicate the kind of process taking place. An analogue of Red Riding Hood called Lyca (from *lycos*, wolf) wanders into the wilderness, falls into an ecstatic trance beneath a rising moon, and is protected by playful beasts of prey who lick her, strip her, and convey her to an initiatory cavern. The maid's parents search for their daughter in the desert, seeking her through a seven day trance. After completing the latter, they are confronted by a fearsome lion who bears them to the ground, but then manifests himself as a spirit or vision, and takes them to their enchanted daughter in the underground cavern, "To this day they dwell/ In a lonely dell,/ Nor fear the wolfish howl,/ Nor the lions' growl". Like Red Riding Hood, the innocent young girl does not fear her animal nature and communes with it freely. Her parents, however, are conditioned to be afraid of transformation. But after confronting their fears through shamanic trance, they realize the beneficence of the sacred, and abandon the settlements for the enchanted wilderness.

The maiden's father disrupts the mysteries. He discovers the wolf, who has eaten both granddaughter and grandmother, asleep — i.e., in an ecstatic trance. He slaughters the beast by cutting open its womb/ belly,⁴⁷ finds the two females whole and unharmed inside, removes them, and forcibly returns them to the emergent realm of civilization. Artemis was “a Wolf-goddess” (Graves 1986, p.222), so the slaying of the animal here represents the patriarchal destruction of the mysteries. The women are reborn, but perversely. Their birth (as egos) coincides with the death of their animal nature. Rather than through the organic guidance of a medicine woman, Red Riding Hood is reborn as if through a caesarian (i.e., kingly) section administered by a male obstetrician, a technologist. Already the hero claims the birth-giving capabilities ascribed to patriarchal gods like Jehovah. The two women are removed intact, but also as separate, isolated individuals. They will no longer be allowed to unite, to intermingle and pool their energies.⁴⁸ From now on they shall be the helots of mankind — and are expected to be grateful for being saved from a supposedly horrible fate.

The designation of the father as either a woodcutter or a hunter remains significant. In either guise, he remains a dispenser of death. One assaults the natural environment, the other exterminates its inhabitants. The two identifications are complementary rather than exclusive. The hunter invades the forest either to exterminate its wildlife — human or animal — or domesticate them

⁴⁷ The extermination continues today: “Spurred on by bounties and rewards, modern men using poison, trap, snare, and gun, together with new weapons provided by an enlightened technology including helicopters and fragmentation grenades, have waged and continue to wage war to the death against the wolf in a campaign that will evidently only cease with the extinction of the animal in North America, if not the world” (Mowat 1986, p.157). Why? Because “In today's world, wolves still experience the joys that come from sharing. Maybe that's why governments pay bounties to the killers of wolves” (Perlman 1983A, p.8).

⁴⁸ Paradoxically, the father figure imposes the homogeneity of heterosexuality in place of the heterogeneity of polymorphous sexuality practised by the women.

as slaves. The woodcutter levels the forest and converts it into lumber.⁴⁹ Then slaves can construct imperial war machines with this timber, so that the process of denudation may be repeated throughout the globe. And when the biosphere has been wrecked, and life on earth becomes impossible, then the patriarchs will catapult themselves into space in search of new worlds to conquer. For their cryogenics can never be anything but an indefinite stop-gap. Their denial of death and corresponding quest for personal immortality are foredoomed to failure. Existence remains cyclical and karmically regulated: deathlessness — in the sense of egoic perpetuity — remains a mirage. Immortality resides in continual transformation, not suspended animation, and this remains rooted in the mysteries of blood, not their supposed transcendence. By definition, however, the hunter denies validity to claims of universal consanguinity. He spills blood, rather than celebrates its mysteries, promoting diminution and death rather than increase and fecundity. And what remains true of the huntsman also applies indirectly to the woodcutter, who destroys the habitats and thus ultimately the lives of consanguinous beings.

But the dual designation of the father figure also possesses a more precise mythical connotation, and relates to the issue of the Wild Hunt or Wild Horde. “The Wild Horde itself was a complex

⁴⁹ “The woodman, as the feller of the trees, opened the forest for seed cultivation: as the maker of dams and irrigation ditches, the provider of fuel for pottery kilns and metal furnaces, the builder of rafts and boats, sledges and wagons, he plays an obscure part in the earliest phases [of history], since his special tools and products, unlike stone, survive only by the happiest accident. But the woodman is in fact the primitive engineer; and his work was essential to all the metallurgical and engineering activities that grew out of the neolithic economy. The first great power machines of modern industrialisation, the watermill and the windmill, were made of wood; and even the boilers of the first steam-engines and locomotives were made of wood” (Muford 1967, p.156).

“When the relative values of the trees can be expressed in terms of cash-compensation for their illegal [i.e., against the lore] felling, the sanctity of the grove is annulled and poetry itself declines” (Graves 1986, p.263).

phenomenon whose origins lose themselves partly in the prehistoric past. There was the assembly of ghosts under the leadership of a feminine divinity, Hecate or Artemis in ancient Greece, Diana or Herodias, the mother of Salome, in the Latin West” (Bernheimer 1962, pp.78–9). But the Wild Horde was more than a spectral crew: in addition to ancestral spirits (the original meaning of the term “ghosts”), it included female devotees of the goddess who gathered “to swarm in wild rapture over the far reaches of the land” (Duerr 1987, p.16). These ecstatic maenads did not indulge in blood sports, but blood mysteries. “Whereas the male god in myth, like the male hero, usually appears in opposition to the animal [i.e., goddess symbol] that he fights and defeats, the Great Goddess, as Lady of the Beasts, dominates [read: safeguards] but seldom fights them. Between her and the animal world there is no hostility or antagonism, although she deals with wild as well as gentle and tame beasts” (Neumann 1955, p.272). The Wild Hunt, which occurred under the aegis of the Divine Huntress, Artemis or Diana, did not seek game, but its participants’ animal natures or tutelary spirits. The pursuit was a “love-chase” (Graves 1986, p.403) rather than a hunt. The arrows shot were those of desire, now more frequently associated with Eros. The hunt consummated not in death, but in a celebration of life, ecstatic orgiastic rites (**orgy** – “from the Greek **orgia**, “secret worship” (Walker 1983, p.742)).

Sympathetic men were welcome at many women’s rites, where they too would manifest their animal natures and become fauns and satyrs, but not at the Wild Hunt. As patriarchal forces began to emerge, however, interlopers like Actaeon try to disrupt exclusively female rites. This voyeuristic young man, refusing to participate in transformatin mysteries, tries to convert the naked bathing maenads into sex objects through the exercise of his gaze. Furthermore, as a hunter, he attempts to contaminate their rites by associating their carnal lusts with his bloodlust. But at this stage patriarchal forces are ineffectual, and Diana’s vengeance is swift and apt. Actaeon, transformed into a stag, is torn to pieces by his own

hunting dogs, emblems of his perverse bestiality, who turn upon and devour him. “This is the elder version, reflecting the religious theory of early European society where woman was the master of man’s destiny: pursued, was not pursued; raped, was not raped — as may be read in the faded legends of Dryope and Hylas, Venus and Adonis, Diana and Endymion, Circe and Ulysses. The danger of the various islands of women was that the male who ventured there might be sexually assaulted in the same murderous way, as according to B. Malinowski in **The Sexual Life of Savages**, men of North-Western Melanesia are punished for trespassing against female privilege. At least one coven of wild women seems to have been active in South Wales during early Medieval times: old St. Samson of Dol, travelling with a young companion, was unlucky enough to trespass in their precinct. A frightful shriek rang out suddenly and from a thicket darted a grey-haired, red-garmented hag with a bloody trident in her hand. St. Samson stood his ground; his companion fled, but was soon overtaken and stabbed to death. The hag refused to come to an accommodation with St. Samson when he reproached her, and informed him that she was one of the nine sisters who lived in those woods with their mother — apparently the Goddess, Hecate. Perhaps if the younger sisters had reached the scene first, the young man would have been the victim of a concerted sexual assault” (Graves 1986, p.400). Evidently, in more tractable cases than Actaeon, conversion through orgiastic expression could take the place of aggressive vengeance.

As patriarchal expansion and persecution developed, however, more sustained resistance became necessary. At this juncture the Wild Hunt lost its initial amorous character and became ecstatically combative. It now transmuted into “the Furious Host — which races in certain winter nights through the valleys and deserted villages, destroying every living thing it meets in its way” (Bernheimer 1952, p.24). Although essentially accurate, Bernheimer’s characterization remains wrong on two counts: such assaults were not confined to winter nights (except in the

- Walker, Barbara G. 1985. **Tha Crone: Woman of Age, Wisdom, and Power** (San Francisco, Harper & Row).
- . 1983. **The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets** (San Francisco, Harper & Row).
- Zerzan, John. 1988. **Elements of Refusal** (Seattle, Left Bank).
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symbolic sense of the bleakest hours), nor was “every” living thing encountered destroyed. Euripides’s **The Bacchae** proves otherwise. The maenads did not attack randomly or seasonally: they often undertook systematic campaigns to extirpate the patriarchal plague, and their incursions were aimed exclusively at civilizing areas and their domesticated inhabitants. Ecstatic anarchic women launched a total assault on the emerging control complex, and attempted its complete overthrow. Their aims were to regenerate the ancient shamanic lifeways, to restore harmony in the face of total evil.

Such a potent threat could not be ignored by control elements, and so they inaugurated a counterforce, a band of brutally violent and demented thugs, who were never entirely under the control of their masters. “The belief in the masculine Wild Horde, which disputes with its feminine counterpart the dominance over central Europe, is usually regarded as of Germanic origin and thus as prior to any influence from the Mediterranean world: whether rightly so it is hard to say, since the history of the motive previous to its first explicit appearance in the chronicle by Oderious Vitalis can only be inferred from philological evidence. Suffice it to say that, in the Alps at least, where the two traditions meet face to face, the leadership of the Wild Horde is accorded almost as often to the wild man, a figure of the local mythology, as it is to the demonic leader of the Wild Horde” (Bernheimer 1952, p.79). The members of these patriarchal shocktroops were known as wild men, werewolves, or berserkers. “These wild young men, who ate raw meat and drank blood, also professed to having Odin, god of death, as their leader” (Duerr 1987, p.62). Famous for driving themselves into murderous frenzies, these fanatical psychopaths were the absolute antithesis of the maenads. In contradistinction, they were the perverse apotheosis of patriarchal man. Worshippers of death (Duerr adumbrates their historical lineage to the nazi SS – although Hell’s Angels are an obvious later manifestation), they dismissed all claims of consanguinity, delighting in cruelty and barbaric, omophagic feasts “dur-

ing the crusades against those who are still outside the machine: untouched trees, wolves, Primitives” (Perlman 1983B, p.16).⁵⁰ They were known as werewolves — “Germanic **wer**, the Latin **vir**, means ‘man’, ‘male’” (Eisler 1951, p.34) — because they wore their fur on the outside (i.e., they dressed in the coats of wolves — and symbolically the skins of the devotees of Artemis — which they had slaughtered). In contrast, the maenads wore their fur inside (i.e., they were inherently, spiritually wild).

As myth and folklore testify, the berserkers transformed the Wild Hunt into a witch-hunt. Maenads, and particularly their elders, the crones, were identified as witches: “The wild woman is thus a libidinous hag and it would seem entirely appropriate to apply to her the term used for centuries to designate creatures of her kind by calling her a witch [or **lamia**, “the wild woman of the woods”]... To understand these identities, one will have to remember that **lamia**, the child-devouring ghoul from Greek antiquity, was regarded in the Middle Ages as a living reality whose existence was accepted without question by such popular writers as Gervasius of Tilbury, of the thirteenth century, or even by the Bishop of Paris in the early thirteenth century, William of Auvergne. These were the writers who established the identity between **lamia** and **strix**, the latter the precise technical term for what we call a witch”.⁵¹ By now, the significance of the references to wildness, libidinousness, shamanism and child-devouring should be apparent. But these elements were either demonized (in

⁵⁰ According to the control complex version, the maenads are guilty of these crimes. Reputedly, at the peak of their frenzy they indulged in a ritual **sparagmos**, the tearing into pieces of a live animal, followed by omophagy. This clearly remains a propagandistic projection of berserker activities onto the ecstatic primitivists. Any **sparagmos** perpetrated by the latter would be directed, as in the case of voyeurs like Actaeon or Pentheus in *The Bacchae* (or even Teiresias or Peeping Tom), at male aggressors.

⁵¹ “Ancient Greek men personified their terror of women’s ‘devouring’ sexuality as the hungry Lamiae, she-demons whose name meant either vaginas or gullets” (Walker 1985, p.17) — another clear linkage of sexuality and alimentation.

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the case of the first three) or interpreted literally (in the last case) in order to justify mass murder.

The berserkers, whether dressed in wolves' skins or the robes of the Inquisition, ruthlessly hunted down and exterminated the maenadic resistance movement: "Modern folklore in regions as far apart as the Austrian Alps, Sweden, Denmark, and England relates how wild women of every variety suffer persecution from a hunting and riding demon who chases through the countryside alone or in rowdy company, and ends, when he has found his victim, by tearing her apart. Even if she escapes murder, the wild woman will be thrown over the demon's horse, tied down with her own long hair, and carried away by force". The Wild Hunt takes place on foot, but the witch-hunt occurs on horseback. The berserkers defeat the amazons, not because the latter are lesser warriors, but because the former are not averse to domesticating and exploiting nature, as figured in the equine species. The pegasus of poetic or shamanic flight is broken, converted into a warhorse, and its master becomes that hated figure, the man on horseback. Increasingly divorced from the earth, he becomes a centaur, a knight, a charioteer, a fighter pilot, a starship commander. And he always rapes and tears the female apart. The Actaeon tale is completely inverted. "It can hardly be accidental that to the chasing of Vila [a hag-like Yugoslavian wild woman], Striga, or the wood damsel there corresponded in classical times the chase of Artemis by a masculine demon, who forces her to precipitate herself from a rock and thus brings about her death... It is striking, at any rate, that the tale of the demise of a woman demon at the hands of a male foe should have been told of the goddess Artemis who, as Hecate, was the whip and leader of rampant souls and who, as Diana, later in the Middle Ages, became the Latin eponym of the wild woman as mistress of the Wild Horde. It is obvious that there must be a historical connection" (Bernheimer 1952, pp.35,129,131-2).

Indeed, at this juncture myth becomes history, but history also invades myth. "When the victory of the patriarchal

Indo-Europeans revolutionized the social system of the Eastern Mediterranean, the myth of the sexual chase was reversed. Greek and Latin mythology contains numerous anecdotes of the pursuit and rape of elusive goddesses or nymphs by gods in beast disguise: especially by the two senior gods, Zeus and Poseidon. Similarly in European folk-lore there are scores of variants on the ‘Two Magicians’ theme, in which the male magician, after a hot chase, out-magics the female and gains her maidenhead” (Graves 1986, p.401).

It is not accidental that these patriarchal marauders were credited with using uprooted oaks as cudgels (Bettelheim 1952, p.71) with which to crush the skulls of their animal and human prey. The three oaks which screen the house of Red Riding Hood’s grandmother indicate that it is a sacred grove (the original meaning of the word temple), devoted to the Triple Goddess and the oak-cult.⁵² As both woodcutter and hunter, the father figure of the narrative storms the grove in order to uproot its trees and its tree-lore, the language of poetic mysteries, and to hunt and kill its inhabitants and celebrants. He is clearly a berserker; his skinning of the slaughtered wolf merely confirms this identification.

Decimation and destruction must continue until women’s rites have been thoroughly eradicated and nature subdued,⁵³ because

⁵² Hercules, perhaps the prototypical, certainly an archetypal hero, wields an oak-club. He is also a warrior, a hunter and an animal domesticator.

⁵³ These socially sanctioned “outlaws” are periodically required by the control complex to extirpate pockets of resistance, but after the latter are eliminated, these berserker figures have no victims upon which to vent their rage. They rapidly become a social nuisance and are then defined as enemies of order, as werewolves who should be hunted down. These groups serve a purpose during periods characterized by the primitive accumulation of capital, but once they are no longer needed the control complex ruthlessly suppresses them.

During lulls between pogroms, however, less rowdy berserkers partly integrate themselves into society, although barely concealing their true identities. Referring to the Middle Ages, one commentator notes: “The fact that in central Europe it is so often the butchers who are privileged to conduct the Carnival may

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— maybe a direct descendant of the progenitrix of Red Riding Hood or Ball — is installed here. And with her initiates, she practices the sacred mysteries which ensure the isomorphism of Dreamtime and the earthly paradise.

The full circle of the uroboros has been completed. The journey may have been merely another revolution in the spiral evolution of the cosmos. There may be no end to the tale, only a whorl without end. But every folktale, every myth must come to an end, even if it remains in perpetual enactment. In this respect, no more appropriate ending exists than the assertion:

...and they all lived happily ever after.

Whether it happened so or not I do not know; but if you think about it you can see that it is true” — Black Elk.

“until the Crone figure was suppressed, patriarchal religions could not achieve full control of man’s minds” (Walker 1985, p.29). And total control was the aim. “There is no doubt that the development leading from the group psyche to ego consciousness and individuality, and from the matriarchal to the patriarchal dominance in psychic life, has its correspondence in the social process. The development of the ego brings with it not only the acquisition of an individual ‘soul’, of an individual name and a personal ancestry, but also of private property” (Neumann 1955, p.268). Deracinated individuation and privatization ensure the facilitation of control, but also evoke an interior horror. “The name of the label is egohood. The heroes have achieved egohood and consciousness and now they are painfully aware that they are no longer part of the cyclical eternal round of the Great Mother. They live a life, a linear phallic extension, a life with a beginning and an end. Precisely because they cannot accept the natural life of death. The ego has definitely arrived on the scene of history, and it is screaming out against its cosmic isolation... Egohood dawned with civilization, and no doubt the rise of warfare associated with it gave many a man an occasion to meditate on the meaning of death... civilized man... when he wipes out an entire city or levels a forest... is no longer working within the natural balance of things. In warfare one is cut off from nature in cutting down his enemy; in warfare

have some historical connection with the corresponding liberty accorded to the same social group in Byzantium”. It cannot be accidental that butchers — animal slaughterers and consumers — policed medieval carnivals which often included representations of the wild man, leader of the masculine Wild Horde. On such occasions, “groups of masked young men belonging to secret societies took it upon themselves to enforce the traditional standards of behavior which were not expressly regulated by the church, and thus to play the part of a community police” (Bernheimer 1952, pp.166–7). Carnavalesque irruptions of popular paganism were contained in festivals organized and managed by shadowy groups, unofficial agencies of the control complex, and precursors of contemporary death squads and vigilante gangs.

the nature of death takes on an entirely new cultural dimension” (Thompson 1981, pp.195–6).

But ruling forces cannot control by terror — interiorized or exteriorized — alone; they need to formulate a technique which infiltrates and structures both consciousness and perception. In the process of looting women’s shrines, this technique was discovered. It was the logos, and here the origins of logocentrism — and indeed of plallogocentrism — may be discovered. “One of the reasons for male enthusiasm for the Logos doctrine was that it provided male gods with a method of creating, formerly the exclusive prerogative of the birth-giving Goddess... Though male gods popularized the idea of the Logos, the ability to destroy and recreate by word-power belonged originally to the Goddess, who created languages, alphabets, and the secret mantras known as Words of Power” (Walker 1983, pp.545–6). Having failed to acquire female generative capacities through imitation, patriarchal males appropriated women’s magico-linguistic faculties. By doing so, they could become creators, not merely destroyers, albeit creating an empire of death. For in appropriating the female logos, they distorted its nature, rendering it qualitatively different from its previous character. ‘It is self-evident that the early phase of man’s [sic] existence, the matriarchal world of the beginning with which we are here concerned, could not be reflected in a discursive consciousness, before the birth of the sun. Its archetypal reality is to be found in the symbols, myths, and figures by which men [sic] speak of it; but aü these are image and metaphor, never knowledge or the direct, reasoned statement by which the later, patriarchal world, rooted in consciousness, knows itself and seeks to formulate itself in religion, philosophy and science” (Neumann 1955, p.212).

Patriarchs gradually developed a form of language which led to the separation of two different types of discourse. “There are two distinct and complementary languages; the ancient, intuitive language of poetry, rejected under Communism, merely mis-spoken elsewhere, and the more modern, rational language of prose, uni-

debilitated condition of their cult-lore, require the direct tutelage of the Earth Mother. They need her watchful, pervasive presence to effectuate the profound recovery their spiritually debased condition requires.⁷⁴ They need her to apply the balm of **charis** and to learn from her the process of reintegration. Victims of the diaspora called history, the dispossessed and dislocated gather “together” — a constantly reiterated term — around the locus of the renewed female mysteries. There they will recall their lost heritage and begin to reconstruct their visionary lifeways. Already this medley of disparate individuals start to recognize the claims of universal interrelatedness: they consider Ball an elder brother and thus become “new companions and kinfolk”.⁷⁵

The barren wastes of history are abandoned. A storm solemnly rolls over, sending sharp lightning bolts to further blast and desolate the scene. The wind whistles through this howling wilderness, souging the dead branches of the World Tree, and scattering ashes from the funeral pyre to the four corners of the universe. In time, the parched soil becomes drenched by downpours of rain. Breezes bring seeds, and the sun brings warmth and light. Profuse vegetation swathes the scars, and animals alter the topography. Streams flow and a new forest towers toward the sky. And ages hence, ecstatic dancers, perhaps from the clan of the grandmother, chance upon this place in their revels, and geomantically sense its sacred resonance. Enraptured by its holy atmosphere, they recognize a new sacred grove. Through animistic communion, they consecrate the area as a site devoted to initiation rites. Soon a venerable crone

⁷⁴ Along with Lawrence, they cry: “We have lost the cosmos, the sun strengthens us no more, neither does the moon. In mystic language, the moon is black to us, and the sun is as sackcloth. Now we have to get back to the cosmos, and it can’t be done by a trick. The great range of responses that have fallen dead in us have to come to life again. It has taken two thousand years [a conservative estimate] to kill them. Who knows how long it will take to bring them to life?” (Lawrence 1977, p.30).

⁷⁵ The use of the word “companion” (Greek **hetairismos**) may be taken to imply a renewal of **hetaerism**.

ory — Mnemosyne, mother of the muses — the poetry of iconic language becomes generalized once again. Global dreamtime can recommence in all its variegated forms, as the peoples of the earth recoallesce into their multifarious assemblages.⁷³

But those who have been dead for so long that they cannot recollect their origins — i.e., those whose cult-lore has been effaced in the mists of time — cluster around Ball and seek to constitute a new clan around the figure of the crone. And surely here Tenskwatawa alludes to people of European extraction, whose rich totemic mysteries were among the first to be shattered into fragments. These people above all, not because they are chosen, but because of the

nurtured in nests situated in the Sacred Tree, so Ball finds the hearts in a nest. He also, of course, returns from his journey endowed with healing capacities.

Out of a common fund of stock mythic elements and devices, Tenskwatawa thus formulates the myth of Ball — and “myths are the maps for the voyage of transformations that the shaman makes time and time again in the course of his or her life” (Halifax 1980, p.277).

(Indicative of the nature of this common fund remains the parallel between Ball and Llew Llaw, mythic Welsh son of the Goddess. “The child Llew Llaw’s exact aim was praised by his mother Arianrhod because as the New Year Robin [i.e., clothed in red], alias Belin, he transfixes his father [a patriarch figure] the Wren, alias Bran to whom the wren was sacred” (Graves 1986, p.318). Llew is slain by his enemy, Gronw Pebyr, and his body cannibalistically consumed. His soul undertakes a nautical journey to the home of his goddess mother, where he undergoes renewal. Returning to life in the shape of a shamanic eagle, he is resurrected and kills Gronw.)

⁷³ “To bring back to an original state that which was in primordial times whole and is now broken and dismembered is not only an act of unification but also a divine remembrance of a time when a complete reality existed. In many instances, shamanic rituals of initiation put the neophyte or apprentice in relation to a mythological origin, connecting the individual with a continuum that transcends the confines of the human condition. The neophyte ultimately embraces the mystery of the totality that existed in **illo tempore**, becoming that totality, a process of profound recollection... The perfection of the timeless past, the paradise of a mythological era, is an existential potential in the present. And the shaman, through sacred action, communicates this potential to all” (Halifax 1980, pp.22,34). The four cornerstones of the paradisaal Golden Age are “nudism, communism, vegetarianism, pacifism” (Bernheimer 1952, p.109).

versally current. Myth and religion are clothed in poetic language; science, ethics, philosophy and statistics in prose”. The former gradually became obscured. “The poetic language of myth and symbol used in ancient Europe was not, in principle, a difficult one but became confused, with the passage of time, by frequent modifications due to religious, social and linguistic change, and by the tendency of history to taint the purity of myth”.

Nevertheless, expressed in different mindstyles or conceptual modes, these two divergent linguistic registers continue to exist. “What interests me most in conducting this argument is the difference that is constantly appearing between the poetic and prosaic methods of thought. The prosaic method was invented by the Greeks of the Classical Age as an insurance against the swamping of reason by mythographic fancy. It has now become the only legitimate means of transmitting useful knowledge... As a result the poetic faculty is atrophied... And from the inability to think poetically — to resolve speech into its original images and rhythms and recombine these on several simultaneous levels of thought into a multiple sense — derives the failure to think clearly in prose. In prose one thinks on only one level at a time, and no combination of words needs to contain more than a single sense; nevertheless the images resident in words must be securely related if the passage is to have any bite. This simple need is forgotten, what passes for simple prose nowadays is a mechanical stringing together of stereotyped word-groups, without regard for the images contained in them. The mechanical style, which began in the counting-house, has now infiltrated into the university, some of its most zombiesque instances occurring in the works of eminent scholars and divines. Mythographic statements which are perfectly reasonable to the few poets who can still think and talk in poetic shorthand seem either nonsensical or childish to nearly all literary scholars” (Graves 1986, p.223).

This discrimination between poetic and prosaic modes of thought — a distinction homologous with the differentiation

between iconic and representational language made earlier — remains crucial to the continued domination of the control complex. By promoting the replacement of poetry by prose, patriarchy severely limits the potentials of the imagination — the capacity to create magic through images, and to cast spells through syllabic utterance. In other words, it imprisons individuals within the linearity of history, discouraging proleptic thought (“the anticipation, by means of a suspension of time, of a result that could not have been arrived at by inductive reasoning”) and analeptic thought (“the recovery of lost events by the same suspension”). Deprived of poetic discourse, humanity remains trapped in the coordinates of spatio-temporal determinism. “In the poetic act, time is suspended and details of future experience often become incorporated into the poem, as they do in dreams. This explains why the first Muse of the Greek triad was named Mnemosyne, ‘Memory’: one can have memory of the future as well as of the past. Memory of the future is usually called instinct in animals, intuition in human beings” (Graves 1986, p.343).

The control complex eliminates memory in two stages. First, by destroying the mysteries it eradicates the transmission of totemic consciousness, that bodily awareness achieved through an “acting out of instinctual tendencies” which remains “primarily a learning experience” (Bettelheim 1955, p.90). Secondly, by replacing oral cult-lore (and its practitioners, those shamanic “repositories of the knowledge of the culture’s history” (Halifax 1980, p.28)) with written culture. Inscriptional codification tends to define the empirical realm of matter as the only reality, and the faculty of reason as the only legitimate means to its accurate perception. The result remains the development of cognicentrism,⁵⁴ the characteristic mode of consciousness of the control complex. Stunting imagination, dis-

⁵⁴ “The persons most prejudiced against a concept of nonordinary reality are those who have never experienced it. This might be termed cognicentrism, the analogue in consciousness of ethnocentrism” (Harner 1986, p.xvii).

oblivion, but remembrance, and with the return of cult-lore mem-

mented by figurative dismemberment, disposal of all bodily fluids, scraping of the flesh from the bones, and removal of the eyes. Once the novice has been reduced to a skeleton and the bones cleansed and purified, the flesh may be distributed among the spirits of various diseases that afflict those in the human community. The bones are all that remain of the shaman, but like seeds, the bones have the potential for rebirth within them. These bone-seeds are covered with new flesh, and the shaman is given new blood. In this transformed condition, the resurrected one receives knowledge of a special and sacred nature and acquires the power of healing, most often from spirit allies. The intense suffering of the neophyte and the subsequent experience of transcendence and knowledge render sacred the condition of this individual, and recovery from the crisis that has immobilized his or her body during this terrifying journey establishes the shaman as one who has met death and been reborn... To divest oneself of flesh and be reduced to a skeleton is a process of reentering what Mircea Eliade has called the ‘womb of primordial life’ in order to be born anew into a mystical condition... Thus freed from the decaying and evanescent flesh, the shaman has access to the eternal being, ever capable of rebirth from his or her bones” (Halifax 1980, pp.12–3,14,15). The psychosymbolic dimensions of initiatory illness are readily apparent: in this condition, barriers between life and death are lowered and access facilitated, the importance of eradicating pain and preventing death is realized, and the significance of universal compassion becomes clear.

Another customary element in shamanic initiation appears in the tale, albeit in an unusual form: namely, the initiate’s ascent of the Sacred Tree. “The Sacred Tree path to rebirth, symbol of the plane of confluence of the human collective, draws the society together by directing its energy toward its powerful center. It is also the means of achieving a transcendent vision of the culture by directing the spirit heavenward. As the shaman is one who is in dynamic relationship to this ‘axis of the world’, the shaman is also the one who balances and centers the society, creating the harmony from which life springs. When this precious equilibrium is lost, the symbolic expressions of the culture’s deepest structures are also lost, as though the skeleton were to turn to dust and the primordial forms were no more” (Halifax 1980, p.15). In “The Cannibal Monster”, such a loss has occurred, and as a result Ball attempts a profound re-equilibration, not through climbing the tree, but by felling it.

More orthodoxically, the youth finds his “soul-bird”, becomes a “bird-shaman”, and undertakes a spirit flight: “The wizard’s soul is transformed into a bird, the wings and body of the spirit-bird and the shaman’s soul are one body, and the distinction between the shaman and the animal ally dissolves. Nature, culture, and supernature merge into the field of transcendent consciousness” (Halifax 1980, pp.16,17). And just as some fledgling shamans find themselves being

where they lived together with great happiness for many years” (Clifton 1984, p.35).⁷² Unlike Styx, the Great Lake does not induce

⁷² Like the Red Riding Hood tale, “The Cannibal Monster” can be interpreted on several levels of meaning literal or historical, moral, allegorical, and anagogical. Such stories are “cultural autobiographies” in which “the ‘truth’ is made up of what lies at the bottom of various events of a perpetual now” (Highwater 1981, pp.113,117) — in other words, the Dreamtime. Their scenarios encapsulate the dynamic experience of an individual, a community, a people, a species, a planet, a galaxy, a universe. They acquire this capacity because “at the level of consciousness of the Daimon (“the integral being of all one’s incarnations”) ... there is a form of thought which is archetypal and a form of thought which is hieroglyphic”: “Hieroglyphic thinking is polyphonic thinking; it is like a four-voiced fugue in which a sound, a geometrical figure, a mathematical equation and a mythopoeic image all become expressed in a single, crystal-like form. In hieroglyphic thinking there are not words and concepts but crystals which are like seeds; if you drop just one of these crystals into the solution of time-space, it would take volumes to express all its meanings”. In order to render these noumenons intelligible, and to conceal them from hostile control forces, numinous images are created: “No human individual can have the entire knowledge of a civilisation, and so the gods mercifully digest the cosmic truths and pass them on to us in the forms of myth and legends and children’s fairy tales. It is hard to remember all the knowledge of a civilisation, but if the thoughts are compressed into an image, then that image can be easily remembered and passed on from generation to generation in legends” (Thompson 1982, pp.58–60 *passim*). Unfortunately, however, these myths remain subject to iconotrophy, i.e., distortion by the control complex, and hence require periodic iconographic renewal. The present text undertakes this task with regard to the two tales which fall under its purview, although it makes no pretence to comprehensiveness in its treatment. It merely hopes to recover some fundamental significations.

The initiatory connotations of the Red Riding Hood narrative have already been rendered apparent. It may be worthwhile, however, to underscore the complementary aspects of “The Cannibal Monster”. The globally typical elements of Ball’s shamanic initiation are displaced onto other figures in the tale and appear in a redistributed order. The youth undertakes a vision quest into, not the sacred wilderness, but the barren wastelands created by control complex depredation. The preparatory purification rite in the sweat lodge and the ordeal of submersion are both attributed to the prisoners. This also remains true with regard to symbolic dismemberment and death, an element of shamanic initiation likewise present in the Red Riding Hood narrative. “The often terrifying descent by the shaman initiate into the underworld of suffering and death may be repre-

missing intuition, discouraging shifts in modes of consciousness, control forces entrap humanity in the cold logic of rationality. And having siphoned out the metaphoric consciousness of myth, they refill human beings with the literal facts of history. Whitehead’s fallacy of misplaced concreteness reigns. Literal interpretation — in short, fundamentalism — becomes the key epistemological mode of the control project. The collection and manipulation of data remains its chief methodology, its way of ensuring the predominance of the logos.

But cognocentrism also produces a more insidious effect: namely, an incapacity to undertake transformation. Primal peoples “look at reality in a way that makes it possible for them to know something by temporarily turning into it”. Transformation remains a keynote of everyday life, particularly infusing relations with nature. “In an effort to move closer to the centres of power in nature, primal people often imitate and transform themselves into things of the natural world that invest them with vision and strength”. All kinds of transformations are available. “Not only are primal people permitted to change their names, but since names are sacred designations of being, people also have the ability to be transformed — briefly or permanently — into other beings and animals. They are often permitted to change their gender, and they will be greatly admired for what would be considered personal peculiarities in the West”. In contrast: “Almost none of the alternative identities available to Indians [and other primal peoples] are accessible to the people of the West. With the exception of the religious transformation of Catholic initiates and women who change their names, family ties, and loyalties when they are married, no personal transformations are acceptable in the West”. Transformation remains difficult here because discursive epistemology impedes access to non-ordinary modes of consciousness. Categorical language inhibits bodily participation in experience: “It cannot **participate** in other beings and objects but can only observe them. Without an **articulate body**; without

a sense of the body's wholeness, we cannot participate in the world that lies beyond observation". Such spectacularization alienates individuals from transformational experience at the level of self, other and community: "Their resistance to transformation includes their inability to accept the changing identities of other people." Authoritarian character structures demand uniformity, and as a result "identity is a prison in the West". "Among primal peoples, there are numerous societal and personal ceremonies that make all types of drastic changes in identity and reality possible for virtually everyone. And these changes are considered actual transformations" (Highwater 1981, pp.61,141,174,181,77,182). But such mutations are ridiculed by most denizens of the control complex, who have been effectively indoctrinated to conformity and routine, to deny the existence of alternative modes of existence — indeed, to desire their own oppression, and that of everyone and everything else too.

This oppression can be identified precisely: its name is culture. The current text traces a shift from anarchy to control, or in other words from cult to culture: "From cult to culture is only a step, but it took a lot of making. Cult-lore was the wisdom of the old races. We now have culture... It is fairly difficult for one culture to understand another. But for culture to understand cult-lore is extremely difficult, and, for rather stupid people, impossible. Because culture is chiefly an activity of the mind, and cult-lore is an activity of the senses... We have not the faintest conception of the vast range that was covered by the ancient sense-consciousness. We have lost almost entirely the great and intricately developed sensual awareness, or sense-awareness, and sense-knowledge, of the ancients. It was a great depth of knowledge arrived at direct, by instinct and intuition, as we say, not by reason. It was a knowledge based not on words but on images. The abstraction was not into generalizations or into qualities, but into symbols. And the connection was not logical but emotional. The word 'therefore' did not exist. Images or symbols succeeded one another in a procession of instinctive and

of the community exercising mutual aid. As they do so, Ball — terminating a process inaugurated by the woodcutters' destruction of the forest and women's rites — cuts down the World Tree with an axe taken from his shamanic medicine bundle. The inhabitants of the old order, the old world symbolized by the lodge which will be demolished by the fall of the arboreal **axis mundi**, are urged to emerge and redeem themselves. All are invited and all respond. This is not a Judaeo-Christian apocalypse with distinctions drawn between saints and sinners. The inhabitants ask what they can do to be "safe at last". They cannot do anything — neither good works nor faith will save them — apart from accept cosmic processes. The control complex desire to leap off the wheel of reincarnation, to be finally secure in the heavenly eternity of a patriarchal god, remains an illusion. Assurance resides in harmonization with karmic cycles of life, death and rebirth. For with this acceptance arises the possibility of resurrection. Hence the apocalyptic renewal, where the dead are brought back to life, and the living are rejuvenated. Those who were carried or "walked" into the lodge, "rushed" or "bounded" out. Infused with energy, they become "whole".

Echoing Ball's plunge, they all immerse themselves in the water, a further cleansing which physically complements the ritual purification of the psyche in the sweat lodge. Submersed in the womb of all earthly life, the oceanic consciousness of the primal mother, they are reborn into totemic consciousness stripped of their clothes and their fear of death. "When they came to the surface, no longer fearful, but freshened and vigorous, they all swam back to shore. Most but not all remembered their former homes and villages. These Ball instructed to make their way back to their kinfolk and friends. But some had been dead so long they had no memory whatever of former times. These gathered together and approached Ball, saying to him: '... our Elder Brother, let us join you and form our own village together. Let us make our own ... clan together'. These new companions and kinfolk Ball gathered around him, leading them and Uncle back to Grandmother's lodge,

(Clifton 1984, pp.34–5). Ball now possesses **mana**, or wisdom: no longer the “small boy” of the beginning of the tale — although only the seven symbolic days of a week have passed⁷¹ — he does not require the prompting of Wren, but knows exactly what to do. He builds a communal sweat lodge, a site for psychosomatic renewal and preparation for shamanic initiation, over which he clearly presides. In this cauldron of renewal, the liberated prisoners, both dead and living, consanguinously commingled, are to experience rebirth:

While those who had been rescued set to work, Ball drew a stone-headed axe from his medicine pouch and began chopping down a huge Walnut tree that leaned over the medicine-house. When they heard the blows of his stone-axe, those inside became frightened and cried out: ‘What is happening to us? What must we do to be safe at last!’

Ball called back: ‘All you living ones! All you breathing ones! Get out of the sweat-house! Run to the cool water of the lake and dive in!’ All inside immediately rushed outside. More ran out than had walked in. A great many bounded out as whole living men, women, and children who had been borne in as gnawed bones. Every one of the murdered ones had been restored to life, cleansed and purified in the sweat-house. All of them together leaped into the refreshing waters of the Kchikami [Great Lake] (Clifton 1984, p.35).

Ball constructs the sweat lodge, the means of renewal, but the act of communal revitalization must come through the members

⁷¹ Turtle, who remains “in charge of a shaman’s lodge” (Halifax 1980, p.379) in Amerindian mythology, possesses a mystical connexion with the number seven.

arbitrary physical connection — some of the Psalms give us examples — and they ‘get nowhere’ because there was nowhere to get to, the desire was to achieve a consummation of a certain state of consciousness, to fulfil a certain state of feeling-awareness” (Lawrence 1977, pp.47–8).

At the basis of the metaphorical cult-lore sensibility remained “the old pagan process of rotary image-thought” in which “every image fulfills its own little circle of action and meaning, then is superseded by another image”: “the pagan thinker or poet — pagan thinkers were necessarily poets — ... starts with an image, sets the image in motion, allows it to achieve a certain course or circuit of its own, and then takes up another image. The old Greeks were very fine image-thinkers, as the myths prove. Their images were wonderfully natural and harmonious. They followed the logic of action rather than of reason, and they had no moral axe to grind. But still they are nearer to us than the orientals, whose image-thinking often followed no plan whatsoever, not even the sequence of action. We can see it in some of the Psalms, the flitting from image to image with no essential connection at all, but just the curious image-association” (Lawrence 1977, pp.52,54).

The metaphorical perception of the play of resemblances and differences remains central to cult-lore sensibility, its predilection for experiencing transformation and its effortless shifts into nonordinary modes of consciousness. Playfulness constitutes its fundamental characteristic. “The most we can say of the function that is operative in the process of image-making or imagination is that it is a poetic function; and we define it best of all by calling it a function of play — the ludic function, in fact”. Indeed, “the whole sphere of so-called primitive culture” can be characterized “as a play-sphere”. “The concept of play merges quite naturally with that of holiness” in such contexts because sacred lore emerges from sacred play. Always anterior and superior to culture, play evolves ritual as a set of particularly felicitous game patterns. “In play as we conceive

it the distinction between belief and make-believe breaks down” (Huizinga 1970, pp.44–5 *passim*).

Spirituality allows belief to emerge from the ludic reticulations of make-believe, whereas religion denies all connexion, denigrating make-believe as fantasy and exalting belief — or faith — as actuality. Recognizing belief as merely doctrinal/sacramental scaffolding around the numinous, spirituality grants that imagination constitutes the most valid and congenial faculty for formulating beliefs about the sacred. But religion, with each of its authoritarian sects claiming their methodology as the only true path to salvation, demands literal belief in its tenets. This difference occurs because religion externalizes and anthropomorphises its deities, who then demand worship, whereas spirituality does not differentiate between interior and exterior, and rather than personify the sacred promotes participation in its vast elemental mysteries. “The very ancient world was entirely religious [read: spiritual] and godless. While men [read: humans] still lived in close physical union, like flocks of birds on the wing, in a close physical oneness, an ancient tribal unison in which the individual was hardly separated out, then the tribe lived breast to breast, as it were, with the cosmos, in naked contact with the cosmos, the whole cosmos was alive and in contact with the flesh of man [read: humanity], there was no room for the intrusion of the god idea. It was not till the individual began to feel separated off, not till he fell into awareness of himself, and hence into apartness; not, mythologically, till he ate of the Tree of Knowledge instead of the Tree of Life, and knew himself **apart** and separate, that the conception of a God arose, to intervene between man and the cosmos. The very oldest ideas of man are purely religious [read: spiritual], and there is no notion of any sort of god or gods. God and gods enter when man has ‘fallen’ into a sense

of the flesh-eaters, those who suppressed the fleshly desires of the consanguinous in an orgy of bloodshed, must now be consumed in the fiery flames, the cloak of the scarlet woman,⁶⁹ Red Riding Hood, and the hue of the red man, Ball. Reconciliation between man and woman, symbolized by these two mythic figures, occurs following the recognition that the toothed vagina and the fanged sphere complement one another. The first possesses a centripetal, the second a centrifugal orientation; like passion and compassion, they remain in dynamic polarity.⁷⁰

But before the love-feast can commence, the old order — metaphorically, the old world — must end. Apocalypse arrives! amidst scenes of terror, wonder and jubilation. Now unfolds **götterdämmerung**, the twilight of the gods, the swallowing up of all in collective initiation at the end — here literally — of time by the death or crone goddess, followed by communal renewal. “Ball now gathered materials for a huge sweat-house. This he constructed on the shores of the Lake of the Great Turtle. And now he commanded all the former prisoners of the cannibal village: ‘Gather together all the poor bones of those who have been murdered and eaten! Carry them with respect to my sweat-house and place them lovingly inside! This done, you survivors will join your relatives and friends in my sweat-house! Await me there!’”

⁶⁹ The maiden’s cloak remains relevant here not merely because of its colour, but also due to the fact noted earlier that in some versions of the tale Red Riding Hood’s clothes are thrown into a fire — a fiery image echoed in the funeral pyre in “The Cannibal Monster”.

⁷⁰ The complementary centripetal and centrifugal motions of the toothed vagina and the fanged sphere echo the identical motions of alimentation (or compassion) and sexuality (or passion) in the model of archaic psychosocial relations.

But reconciliation also occurs on another iconic plane. In global mysticism, the kundalini snake energy ascends through the seven chakras situated in the spine until it reaches the head, when the initiate becomes capable of shamanic flight. Typically, this process is imaged by the plumed serpent or Bird-and-Snake Goddess. Conjoining the Red Riding Hood tale with “The Cannibal Monster” produces a comparable effect. The uroboric serpent of the former modulates into the avian journey of the latter, creating illumination through union.

1984, p.34) from his medicine bundle and skewering the hearts together.

In this section of the tale, the onus once again falls on Ball. Interestingly, however, a further shift in emphasis from the masculine to the feminine occurs at this juncture. He can injure the cannibals with the phallic wolf-fang, but can only kill them with a needle — the tool of the sewer, spinner or spinster, the grandmother or Fate figure who spins, weaves and cuts the thread of life. Only the crone aspect of the goddess, recovering her usurped death-dealing capacities, can annihilate the control complex — here through the agency of her grandson. “The Crone... can still serve women as an empowering image of biological truth, female wisdom, and mother-right, to which men must learn to defer, if they are ever to conquer the enemy within themselves” (Walker 1985, p.144). Ball implicitly defers to the crone, and in various respects destroys the internal foe: he masters his patriarchal tendencies and consequent fear of death, and slaughters the demons whose souls were embedded in the very heart of America. But it should be noted that the latter act can only occur once the cannibal monsters’ bodies and souls have been brought into close contiguity — in other words, metaphorically reunited. Ball prevents further depredations against the prisoners during his return journey by tormenting the monsters into agonized helplessness. Only when contiguity of the abstracted parts occurs, however, can the death of the control complex take place. Cartesian dualism must be overcome. Body and soul, material apparatus and the spirit of authority must be brought together to be utterly nullified. Nothing must remain — for if it does the entire edifice can be reconstituted. The assault on the control complex must be total, but primarily spiritual. Without this vital ingredient, the whole resistance project remains worthless.

Hence the fact that Ball places the cannibal corpses on a funeral pyre, “and only when the flames were roaring did he turn away” (Clifton 1984, p.34). Only fire, the devouring, shamanic element, can cleanse the earth of the pathology of control. The flesh

of separateness and loneliness” (Lawrence 1977, p.101).⁵⁵ Separation connotes alienation, deracination, spectacularization and cog-nocentrism. Cult-lore invites imaginative participation, but culture interposes a mediatised version of reality which provokes frustration and anger — violence directed outward onto those who remain immersed in the sacred. At this juncture the origins of imperialism may be discerned.

In this respect, it remains significant that the praxis of cog-nocentrism also provides the control complex with a language of conquest. The latter was necessary given the imperial aim of global domination. Having extirpated primitivist resistance and denuded the surrounding natural environment, control forces set off to conquer new worlds. In doing so, they projected their negative understanding of totemic consciousness onto other cult-lore communities. This re-mained a comparatively simple act given that the lifeways of the people encountered broadly resembled those of the invaders’ repudiated ancestors. Encountered peoples were characterized as savages, a word etymologically derived from the Latin term *silva*, sylvan or forest-dweller. Immediately, repeating a familiar pattern, such people were identified as cannibals. From Herodotus “until the end of the fifteenth century the literal term **anthropophagist** described those savages on the fringes of western civilization who partook of human flesh” (Arens 1979, p.44). Often, they were also characterized as practitioners of incest: “Formerly, the accusation that certain peoples in the past or distant present were engaged in both cannibalism and incest was quite common. These visions of the exotic other were popularly entertained in travellers’ accounts for centuries” (Arens 1986, p.vii). Such characterizations acted as a pretext for invasion and

⁵⁵ In this respect, references in the present text to the Goddess should be understood as a form of shorthand; or, more precisely, they should be taken as originally (i.e., archaically) intended: as metaphoric expressions of the ineffable.

enslavement. Colonization was often justified on the basis of the supposed cannibalistic (and other immoral) practices of indigenes.

But anthropophagy, despite what many anthropologists continue to believe, remains a fantasy. Arens concludes: “excluding survival conditions, I have been unable to uncover adequate documentation of cannibalism as a custom in any form for any society”. Symbolic cannibalism, eradicated in the domesticated heartlands of the control complex, was — and is — interpreted in a literal manner by the invaders. The empirical orientation of the control mentality ensures a literalist conclusion, which aptly conforms with imperial aims. “In examining the pervasiveness of the notion of others as cannibals, the implication that this charge denies the accused their humanity is immediately recognizable. Defining them in this way sweeps them outside the pale of culture and places them in a category with animals... Warfare and annihilation are then excusable, while more sophisticated forms of dominance, such as enslavement and colonization, become an actual responsibility of the culture-bearers”. The imputation of cannibalism comprises a convenient pretext for wiping out resistance. “According to Las Casas, who accompanied Columbus on one expedition and spent a lifetime on the [Caribbean] islands before turning to religion and a defense of the Indian cause, any resistance to Spanish colonization was laid to the cannibals... Resistance and cannibalism became synonymous and also legitimized the barbaric Spanish reaction”. History repeats itself, and in this respect it remains unsurprising that at the same time that witches, the control complex’s internal antagonists, were being persecuted on the pretext of alleged cannibalism, an identical slur was used to justify the slaughter or enslavement of its external opponents. “Thus the operational definition of cannibalism in the sixteenth century was resistance to foreign invasion followed by being sold into slavery, which was held to be a higher state than freedom under aboriginal conditions” (Arens 1979, pp.21,140,49,51). Indeed, such was the deep-seated nature of this definition that the

universe in embryo” (Walker 1983, p.270), the result of the primal coupling of goddess and serpent. Like a cuckoo, the control complex has smuggled into another’s nest a progeny that flings out the rightful inhabitants and bleeds its surrogate parent dry.⁶⁸ The nest is America, the rightful inhabitants are indigenes, and the parent is Nature, Mother Earth. Here the motivations behind control complex imperialism are revealed. Fearing and denying death, control forces attempt a perverse rebirth: they aim to become born again Adams in a continent empty through genocide, a virgin continent waiting to be raped. Death’s ravages are displaced onto others so that the controllers may be resurrected into eternity. Ball intends to abort this horrific natality.

After surfacing with the three hearts clasped in his arms, Ball receives further instructions from Wren: “When you are ready to kill the cannibal monsters you must thrust a large bone-needle into all three hearts, impaling them, spearing them together! Only then will these three vile monstrosities die at last.” The young man slips the hearts into his medicine pouch, and the return journey to the cannibal encampment begins. On the way Ball torments the cannibals by squeezing and twisting the hearts, but only on arrival does he kill the monsters by drawing “a long, sharp bone awl” (Clifton

⁶⁸ The symbolic dimensions of Ball’s shamanic quest become apparent in the complex of factual inaccuracies contained in the image of the nesting turtle. First, the female turtle does not lay eggs underwater, but buries them in mud or sand on dry land. Secondly, she does not incubate her eggs, but abandons them once they have been concealed. Hence, thirdly, it remains inconceivable that anything alien could be nurtured in her bosom. But comparable behaviour patterns, inapplicable to turtles, remain relevant to birds. Some aquatic avians — including varieties of cranes — build floating nests in open shallow water or hidden among reeds. Birds incubate their eggs, and, as in the case of the cuckoo, extraneous eggs can be deposited in the nests of other fowl. Metaphorically, then, Wren and Crane return to their origins by undertaking the journey to the nest-womb. But Ball too makes a comparable return: the Great Turtle clearly remains a mother or grandmother analogue.

responsibility to restore the lost harmony... The ancient rituals that have persisted through millennia are the true heart of the community, linking it to an inexhaustible and sacred past. When there is social strife and disharmony, resolution is frequently achieved through these timeless events” (Halifax 1980, p.21). Now this process must be brought to an apocalyptic climax.

The trio – the third triad of the text – journey to the Great Lakes. Wren guides, Ball rides on Crane’s back. “When they reached a certain spot near the middle of this inland sea” (Clifton 1984, p.33), Wren signals and Ball plunges down to the lake bottom like a diving bird, and commands the Great Turtle to swim upward.⁶⁶ The amphibian’s instantaneous compliance indicates Ball’s shamanic eminence, particularly given that the American continent – Turtle Island – rests on its back. The young man’s capabilities are quite literally earth-shaking: at his behest global eversion commences.⁶⁷ But such an event remains absolutely necessary in the current context.

In the Great Turtle’s nest, “Ball spied ... three hearts attached one to the other” (Clifton 1984, p.34). Here, in the externalized womb of the New World itself, lie the perverse eggs of patriarchy. Laid by men, addled and unhatched, they supplant the cosmic egg, “mystical symbol of the Creatress, whose World Egg contained the

⁶⁶ “Shaman and waterbird were essentially analogous, as both were masters of the three realms of existence [earth, water, air]” (Halifax 1982, p.86). Ball’s plunge echoes the global folk-motif of the Earth-Diver, a male figure who dives into the primal female ocean to haul up some earth to form dry land – i.e., symbolically create the world. This action becomes significant in the context of the young man’s later world-generating activities which this incident prefigures.

Ball’s journey to the Great Turtle may represent Tenskwatawa’s search for his mother – earthly embodiment of the Great Mother – who abandoned him as a child and was called Methoataske (“Turtle Laying Its Eggs”).

⁶⁷ This apocalyptic scene depicts the message given to Tenskwatawa by the Great Spirit: “If you Indians will do everything which I have told you, I will overturn this land, so that all the white people will be covered and you alone shall inhabit the land” (Edmunds 1983, p.38).

very word **cannibal** derives from a Spanish mispronunciation of Caribs, the name of an indigenous Carribbean tribe.

By this time the control complex has become a Leviathan, “a Worldeater” (Perlman 1983A, p.195), and to warrant global consumption, it projects anthropophagic ideas onto the entirety of the outside world, when they most clearly apply to itself. The other always remains cannibalistic and incestuous, and this identification justifies its domination or extermination. Projecting its own evil onto adversaries remains a typical control complex ruse. In this way an important inversion becomes possible: the forces of death can convince themselves that they are in fact the forces of life, bravely battling the legions of darkness and ignorance. And a denial of death can once again occur. Similarly, the continuing – metaphorically correct – identification made between American indigenes and wolves⁵⁶ not only vindicated the destruction of both, but links the eradication of free shamanic communities in the New World with comparable extirpations in Eurasia and later Africa and Australasia.

In the New World, resistance to Leviathanic invasion assumed similar contours to those in Europe. That resistance, as in the Old World, was ultimately unsuccessful, but the lessons that can be learned from its failure may infuse contemporary attempts to evoke a total revolution toward visionary anarchy. To appreciate the significance of indigenous resistance it remains necessary, not to investigate the historical record, but to re-enter the world of myth. Once again narrative remains inadequate to the task: only mythopoeic tales can convey the requisite depth of insight.

As a complement to the tale of Red Riding Hood, derived from European folklore, attention will now shift to an Amerindian tale entitled “The Cannibal Monster”. This shift, rather than merely con-

⁵⁶ “... The gradual extension of our settlements will as certainly cause the savage, as the wolf, to retire; both being beasts of prey, tho’ they differ in shape’ (G. Washington in 1783)” (Perlman 1985, p.44n).

tinental in proportion, involves a displacement from a well-known folktale to a relatively obscure fable. Given these circumstances, it remains important to understand some-thing of the context of its expression.

“The Cannibal Monster” was the creation of a great visionary shaman named Tenskwatawa (“Open Door”), and known as the Shawnee Prophet. This medicine man, “the leading figure in the Indians’ efforts to resist the Americans” (Edmunds 1983, p.x), helped to forge an inter-tribal confederacy opposed to American settlement of the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes region. The confederacy remained a major obstacle until 1813, when Tenskwatawa’s brother, the great warrior Tecumseh, was killed in battle and the military resistance disintegrated.

In 1823, Tenskwatawa was interviewed by the Indian agent at Detroit, Charles Trowbridge, and during that or the following year the Prophet narrated a series of stories, including “The Cannibal Monster”. Trowbridge, personal secretary and researcher for the governor of Michigan Territory, Lewis Cass, was assigned to discover all he could about the languages and cultures of the Indian tribes in the area. Tenskwatawa, interviewed through a translator in Cass’s office, sometimes with the governor present, had to provide answers to a long questionnaire (one question asked: Do the Shawnee eat wolves?). But apparently he became bored with the questionnaire format, and decided to relate something more profound about his visions and the lifeways of his people. And so he narrated eleven tales — including “The Cannibal Monster” — to Trowbridge, fulfilling his role as a prophet by speaking truth to power. Trowbridge predictably regarded these tales as little more than curiosities, and the transcriptions sat in the back of a desk drawer for fifty years before being donated to the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. An exact printed copy of the Trowbridge manuscript was published for scholarly reasons in 1965, but not until the 1984 retelling of selected tales by James A. Clifton did they reach anything approaching the public domain.

particular crone) principle, suggesting that Ball needs to combine his phallic impetuosity (the ball) with the “female” intuition of his power animal. Certainly, however, as an agent of Mother Earth, Wren can be taken as female, and thus as a representative of the grandmother (just as the wolf represented the animal aspect of her counterpart in the Red Riding Hood tale). Like other men before him, Ball can become an initiate only with female aid.

After encountering Wren, Ball calls “for Crane to join him” (Clifton 1984, p.33) — a further indication of his developing shamanic authority. Crane, perhaps to counterbalance Wren, is definitely identified as male. Ball tells the two birds: “Now I am ready to fly with you to the Great Lake where we can find the hearts of this Cannibal-Monster, his repulsive wife, and that foul hound” (Clifton 1984, p.33). The birds agree that they too are now prepared to undertake this journey. The young man’s wishes meet compliance because of the spiritual transformations he has undergone. His previous arrogant assertions of his ability to fly and single-handedly save his people from destruction have evidently been exposed as illusions. The heroic delusions of the incipient warrior, eager to replicate the mistakes of the previous generation, and the accompanying hubris, are now gone. In their place resides a humility and receptiveness which in no way efface the healthily refractory elements in his character. Ball has employed his intuition, neatly sidestepped the karmic and ethical implications of bloodshed, and used his magic powers to nourish the community (another function attributed to the grandmother at the opening of the tale). In other words, rather than acting in an aggressive and ultimately self-serving manner, he has altruistically served others by beginning to heal the rifts in the sacred lifeways opened up by the control complex. “The shaman’s work entails maintaining a balance in the human community as well as in the relationships between the community and the gods or divine forces that direct the life of the culture. When these various domains of existence are out of balance, it is the shaman’s

feeds the famished prisoners, among whom Ball shares it,⁶⁵ saying: “Take your strength and courage from this fine, rich, tasty, bear-stew.” The dilation of this morsel to fill the hungry bellies of all the inmates pointedly contrasts with the fact that the rest of the bear “made just one breakfast only” for the three cannibals. But the concatenation of the medicine pouch and the miraculous augmentation of food indicates the symbolic significance of the episode. While the voracious cannibals — anthropophagists nonetheless for eating bear meat, symbolic substitute for Uncle’s flesh — merely consume the bear’s body (and still remain unsatiated), the indigenes are adequately replenished by metaphorically imbibing its spiritual essence. Although dead, like the pelt used by Ball earlier, the bear spiritually nourishes the prisoners, giving them “strength and courage” (Clifton 1984, p.33) to resist through reengagement with their animal natures. This constitutes a basis upon which a resumption of traditional totemic lifeways can occur — something reinforced on the following day, when the entire episode recurs and a further restoration of vitality takes place.

After this second day of bear meat breakfast, however, Ball quits the cannibal settlement and goes into the wilderness in search of his vision quest. There he reencounters “friend Wren” (Clifton 1984, p.33) — an indication of their new relationship. “Eurasian shamans couldn’t practice until they completed an initiatory death and resurrection, with a soul journeying to heaven. In this, a shaman required the help of a female guardian angel, a celestial wife or mistress, or the earthly embodiment of such a being, who was often supposed to be able to change her shape to that of a bird” (Walker 1985, p.75). If this pattern holds true for Amerindian shamans, then this increases the likelihood of the female gender identity of Wren. In that case, the bird represents the activation of the female (and in

⁶⁵ “Sharing is the heart of the lost community. It is antithetical to Leviathan’s very existence... By having all things in common, the resisters are melting the beast from within its entrails” (Perlman 1983A, p.107).

Following the defeat of the military resistance, Tenskwatawa lived in exile in Canada from 1813 to 1826. His cooperation in answering Trowbridge’s questionnaire and ultimately in narrating his eleven tales comprised part of his campaign to be allowed to return to live in a Shawnee village in the United States. Before exile, he had been a charismatic and renowned figure in the resistance movement. Now, like his people, he was impoverished and demoralized. Tenskwatawa, once a great prophet, was now a defeated man. Relating his tales was a final, but nonetheless for us a crucial, act of defiant resistance. And of the eleven fables, “The Cannibal Monster” remains the most significant of all.

In many respects, “The Cannibal Monster” resumes the narrative where Red Riding Hood left off. Or, rather, it develops some variations on the themes of the European folktale. The tale opens in a context of seemingly crushed resistance. Just as Red Riding Hood visits her progenitrix in the forest, so this narrative centres on a boy who lives isolated amidst “fields and forests” with his grandmother. Like his European analogue, he is “a small boy” and “a little fellow”. Moreover, he shares with his precursor, who was known merely by the appellation of the cape given to her by her grandmother, an archetypal identity. He too has no name, only a title accorded to him by his grandmother: Ball. His identity derives from his constant plaything. “This ball he was always tossing and amusing himself with. Now this sphere was unique, for sticking out of its side was... a long, sharp-pointed fang” (Clifton 1984, p.23). Unlike Red Riding Hood’s cape, however, the provenance of Ball’s sphere remains unexplained within the narrative. To appreciate the significance of this ball, attention will shift to the visions of another great Amerindian shaman, Black Elk.

In **The Sacred Pipe**, Black Elk discusses a game “which was played with a ball, four teams and four goals which were set up at the four quarters” of the compass. Originally this game was sacred, “not really a game, but one of our most important rites”: “The game as it is played today represents the course of a man’s life,

which should be spent in trying to get the ball, for the ball represents **Wakan-Tanka** [the sacred lifeforce], or universe... In the game today it is very difficult to get the ball, for the odds – which represent ignorance – are against you, and it is only one or two of the teams who are able to get the ball and score with it. But in the original rite everybody was able to have the ball, and if you think about what the ball represents, you will see that there is much truth in it” (Brown 1953, pp.127–8).

Black Elk relates the visionary origins of this game and the ceremonies it inaugurated. Central to the game is a “sacred ball” painted in such a way that it represents the universe, the pantheistic unity of all things. The ball is held by a “young and pure girl” who stands at the centre of the universe. “She sees her Grandmother and Mother Earth and all her relatives in the things that move and grow. She stands there with the universe on her hand, and all her relatives there are really one” (Brown 1953, pp.132,133). A circle of people surround the girl. She throws the ball to the west, where one person catches it, offers it to the six sacred directions, and returns it to the girl at the centre. The same process occurs for the north, east and south respectively. Finally, the girl throws the ball straight up, and all rush in to catch it. Those who are fortunate enough to catch the ball in any one of these five throws are highly favoured.

Black Elk explains the significance of this ludic rite. First, he stresses the importance of the fact that “it is a little girl, and not an older person, who stands at the center and throws the ball. This is as it should be, for just as **Wakan-Tanka** is eternally youthful and pure, so is this little one who has just come from **Wakan-Tanka**, pure and without any darkness”. Secondly, he explains that “Just as the ball is thrown from the center to the four quarters, so **Wakan-Tanka** is at every direction and is everywhere in the world; and as the ball descends upon the people, so does his power, which is only received by a very few people, especially in these last days”. This imminent millenarian perspective informs Black Elk’s view of

mic consciousness, and listen to its guidance, channelled through Wren. Only then will he be able to undertake spiritual resistance as part of a holistic liberatory praxis which heals and restores harmony to psyche, community and cosmos, even as it annihilates the pathology of control.

When the party arrive at the “monster’s village” (Clifton 1984, p.31) – not a dwelling, the site of a social group rather than a mere family – the one-eyed cannibal wife, a negative crone figure in contrast to Ball’s grandmother,⁶⁴ scolds her husband (a patriarchal designation) for returning with such a scrawny specimen as the youth. The cannibal silently considers that the latter will eventually be eaten, but Ball, as at his grandmother’s lodge, impertinently speaks up for himself – once again in sharp contrast to his cowed and obedient uncle. By contrasting the two indigenous figures in this way, Tenskwatawa indicates that the despondency of the militarily defeated older generation must be replaced by the intransigence of young spiritual resisters.

The next morning Wren’s prediction proves correct: the cannibal despatches Uncle to kill a bear. But Ball, taking the bird’s advice and using his intuition, takes Uncle’s place, finds a bear and chases it back to the compound for the cannibal to slaughter. Now he has encountered Wren, Ball acquires a sense of the consanguinous sanctity of all life, and refrains from killing the creature. But this does not prevent the youth from covertly slipping a tiny piece of bear fat into his medicine pouch. This container remains significant in the present context because it holds his shamanic artefacts, and thus by being retained there the bear fat gains magical properties. Hence, when cooked, it expands like Christ’s loaves and fishes, and

⁶⁴ Indeed, the entire cannibal kinship group – husband, wife and dog – are a distorted, nuclear family version of the Shawnee trinity, the Grandmother, her Grandson and Brother-Dog.

principles, their spiritual essence, their very souls — discrete from their bodies.

The control complex — the principle of control — can be injured but never killed by merely physical or martial assaults. Its apparatus may be damaged, but not its constitutive principle, its **sine qua non**. Just as a single-celled cloning organism can undergo cell division in binary fission and produce two new cells possessing identical genetic material, so Leviathan can repair and regenerate itself so long as the codices or hereditary information pattern transmitted from each reconstitution remains in the structure of psychosocial analogues of DNA molecules. As long as the pattern remains intact, even if in a single cell, the pathological leviathanic organism can reconstruct and begin to expand itself. An attack on a part is never an attack on the whole. The cannibal monsters keep their bodies apart from their souls. Individuals may be physically wounded, but the cohesive principle, the spirit of authority, permeates the entire system. And while one constituent part remains, the whole sociopathy, and the potential for its rejuvenation, becomes inevitable. Indigenous military resistance has only strengthened the bloodthirsty war-god by feeding its maw with corpses. Such a response to incursions by control forces remains inadequate because of its partial nature. To be efficacious/counteraction must be total, but more importantly it must be holistic. It must heal as it eradicates, and it must take place on all planes, including — most crucially of all — the spiritual. The spirit of authority, which is intangible because it is everywhere and nowhere, pervading the entire system, can be combatted only on the spiritual plane. Physical attacks miss the point because they assail the units in the system, not the structural relations, the filaments, the spiritual adhesive which acts in the interstices and provides the organization with its motivational cohesion. Ball's fanged sphere harms individuals, but cannot defeat the complex because his attacks occur only on the physical plane and are the product of his personal ego. He must learn to renounce the will of the lesser self, to merge it in the wider subjectivity of the cos-

contemporaneity. "At this sad time today among our people, we are scrambling for the ball, and some are not even trying to catch it, which makes me cry when I think of it. But soon I know it will be returned to the center, for our people will be with it. It is my prayer that this be so, and it is in order to aid this 'recovery of the ball', that I have wished to make this book" (Brown 1953, pp.137,138).

The significance of Ball's appellation should now be apparent. He is one of those persons fortunate enough to catch the ball — indeed this act defines his entire identity. And he has been especially blessed in that the ball is armed with a fang, which points the way toward renewed resistance and ultimately (when combined with the recovery of other traditional ways, especially the shamanic power animal) liberation. But Ball always remains an agent of the pure girl at the centre of the sacred circle (who herself, through her youth, her virginity, and her close relationship with her grandmother, remains an analogue to the Red Riding Hood figure). He must ultimately return the ball to her. When the game of life ends, the ball must be recentred, and then harmony will recommence.

One issue that requires elucidation, however, is the question of why Tenskwatawa chose to displace the female figure from the centre of his tale, and selected a male as his redemptive figure.⁵⁷ The answer lies in his patriarchal tendencies, which were precipitated by the invading control complex's decimation of his people's

⁵⁷ Ball recovers the rightful male role as agent of the Goddess, a function perverted by the patriarchal hero. To feminists and others who may complain that the present text represents women (in the Red Riding Hood tale) as defeated and in need of redemption by a male (in the Ball fable), I can only point to the available mythic resources as a partial excuse. Precedence for selection of a male child as a redeemer does exist in **The Bacchae** and the actual maenadic movement it represents, however, in the shape of the androgynous Dionysus — an analogue of Ball.

Women clearly do not need a male saviour to redeem them from patriarchy. But any liberation will remain partial until we all, regardless of gender or any other distinction, cooperate to eradicate the control complex through a total revolution aimed at the creation of universal anarchy.

traditional lifeways. “Pressures engendered by the loss of lands, food shortages, white injustice, and disease caused serious rifts within the [Shawnee] tribal communities. The traditional fabric of interpersonal relationships, formalized roles, and elaborate kinship groups came apart because the tribes were unable to cope with the rapid changes around them” (Edmunds 1983, p.5). The Prophet tried to revivify traditional lifeways, but his reforms were insidiously infected by the control virus.⁵⁸

Like many other tribes, the Shawnee believed that their world was an island balanced on the back of a Great Turtle. “But the Shawnee were unique among related Algonquin peoples in thinking of their Creator as a woman, whom they addressed as our Grandmother”. She “was accompanied and aided by her young grandson and a small dog” in traditional myth. However, Tenskwatawa “attempted to remake the creator-spirit over into the image of a male and this is one of the reasons why most Shawnee refused to follow his teachings” on cosmological issues. He “recast the image of Creator in an effort to enhance the status of males”: “However, ... Grand-mother, her Grand-son, and even Brother-Dog are not absent from the tales Tenskwatawa told. Although much reduced in importance, she appears and reappears in these stories as a protective and important if not all-powerful figure. Obviously, Tenskwatawa could try to demote, but he could not entirely erase her memory” (Clifton, pp.67,68). The “grandmother Earth” (Halifax 1980, p.180) figure appears much in this light in “The Cannibal Monster”.

⁵⁸ “Although the Prophet’s new creed attacked some facets of traditional Shawnee culture, it attempted to revitalize others. Indeed, much of Tenskwatawa’s preaching was nativistic in both tone and content. If shamans and medicine bundles were forbidden [because corrupt], the Shawnees were encouraged to return to many other practices followed by their fathers [sic], Tenskwatawa urged them to renounce their desire to accumulate property and to return to the communal life of the past”. Nevertheless: “The rituals [introduced by Tenskwatawa] probably reflect the Shawnee’s contact with Roman Catholicism” (Edmunds 1983, pp.36–7,40).

sents the goddess)⁶³ warns Ball: “That will be his [Uncle’s] fate, unless you are patient, unless you can find some way to save him”. The onus remains on the youth, but again non-attachment and self-possession, the ability to achieve equipoise and thus become open to the guidance of intuition remains the key to right action. More explicitly, Wren insists: “By yourself you cannot save Uncle... It will be impossible by yourself, for their [the cannibals’] hearts are not kept in their bodies. Their hearts are kept and guarded in the lodge of... the Great Turtle, himself. And Great Turtle lives in a far distant place, at the bottom of ... the Great Lake”. By himself, even with the fanged sphere, Ball remains powerless; he needs the help of totemic or power animals, but as yet fails to realize this fact. He mentally – “thinking but not speaking aloud” – responds to Wren by resolving: “I will speak to the Great Turtle and capture the hearts of these devils by myself”. But the telepathic Wren reminds him that he cannot do anything on his own: “Have patience, Boy-With-A-Ball... have patience and remember you cannot fly” (Clifton 1984, p.31). The youth needs the spirit-bird to take him on a shamanic flight, but egotistically proclaims that he does not need any help to become airborne. At this, the exasperated Wren ceases from conversation.

Ball’s hubris remains inappropriate because the bird invites him to abandon the domain of history constituted by the invading control complex, for the realm of myth. This shift is figured in the introduction of the global folk motif of the external soul, in which “A person (often a giant or ogre) keeps his soul or life separate from the rest of his body” (Thompson 1956, p.43), and “The hero follows instructions [“from his animal brothers-in-law”], finds the ogre’s soul hidden away, and kills the ogre by destroying the external soul” (Aarne 1961, p.93). The cannibal monsters remain invulnerable (indeed, invincible) because they keep their hearts – their vital

⁶³ In European tradition, “the Wren is the soul of the Oak” (Graves 1986, p.298) – a further link between Ball and the oak-cult of Red Riding Hood.

and thus denying fears of entropy and death. Sacrificial victims are slaughtered so that the system may continue to function (something true since at least the patriarchal inauguration of the hero/tañist agon).

“The Old Ones”, Wren continues, “may tell Uncle to kill a bear in a place where bears are never seen. When he fails, he will then be starved, and when he is almost dead, he will be food for the hunger of this loathsome trio. When you arrive you will soon see many other prisoners already there, those who have already failed. These are now no more than skin and bones. Soon they will be butchered and thrown into the kettle” (Clifton 1984, p.31). Uncle’s prospective fate, mantically foreseen by Wren, consists of reluctantly performing a parodic version of the hero’s supposedly noble quest. The control project has surpassed its “heroic” phase, and its knightly deeds of derring-do are foisted upon coerced and unwilling captives. The Age of Chivalry is dead, and the controllers no longer take personal risks. Concentration camp inmates are forced on pain of death to implement the leviathanic project of destroying the wilderness. Uncle must kill a bear, a wild animal often mythically equated with the wolf, the beast of Artemis and of the fanged sphere. The ursine image echoes Ball’s concealment in the bearskin to discover his grandmother’s secret. The latter episode remains significant here because, just as it indicated that the boy could only gain insight through assuming his animal nature, so the imperative that a bear must be killed constitutes not merely a physical denudation of nature, but a further obliteration of indigenous shamanic capacities. Prisoners are compelled to liquidate, not merely the wilderness, but their ability to resonate with it, their own animal natures, and hence their capabilities to resist and create a regenerated anarchy.

Wren, as agent of the sacred cosmos, aims to terminate this process through the instrument of Ball. The bird (whose gender remains unspecified, although in European traditions it is customarily identified as female — as in Jenny Wren — because it repre-

At the beginning of the tale, Ball spends much of his time perfecting his aim with the “unique” fanged sphere. The addition of the fang to the wholly spherical ball of Black Elk’s ritual remains significant for two associated reasons. First, a fang, according to the **Concise Oxford Dictionary**, is a “canine tooth, especially of dogs and wolves” — a feature which here symbolizes the connexion between Ball and the European wolf-goddess. Secondly, although the fanged ball seems wholly phallic — it no doubt unconsciously echoes the Western sigil for masculinity, ♂ — this impression remains misleading. The ♂, the sign of Mars — a red figure like Adam (“a man of blood” — i.e., a participant in consanguinous mysteries) — represents “a ligam-yoni arrangement of a phallic spear attached to a female disc” (Walker 1983, p.598). Like Red Riding Hood, the redskin youth remains associated with wolves and the colour of blood. In short, on both counts, Ball remains an agent of the goddess: his masculinity remains firmly rooted in womb consciousness.

But Ball’s connectedness and masculinity are both misdirected. He perfects his aim with the ball so that “he could hit even tiny birds in flight, while they were darting back and forth amidst the trees” (Clifton 1984, p.23). This aberrancy, predicated on a loss of consciousness of universal consanguinity, remains symptomatic of the control complex’s disruption of traditional initiation rites. The grandmother does not ritually correct his deviant behaviour, but seems preoccupied with other matters — a neglect of her initiatory duties which provides the wellspring for the narrative. Ball’s redemptive mission remains based on the absence of initiation.

Every day the grandmother digs up wild tubers, roots and potatoes — i.e., uncultivated vegetable foodstuffs — to eat. She no longer receives the offerings of Red Riding Hoods. Food has become scarce now the invaders have arrived. And just as in the Demeter myth, when the daughter-initiate figure, Persephone, has been kidnapped and the Earth Mother refuses to be fruitful, making the world barren, so here the crone-goddess figure, similarly bereft, inhabits a

place of scarcity. But those few tasty comestibles she does find are secreted away, and the famished Ball is only given “the smallest, roughest, bitter potatoes for his meal” (Clifton 1984, p.23), symbolizing the meagre rations — in every respect — accorded to the indigenes by the invaders.

Ball wonders what his grandmother can be doing with the nourishing food she finds. And so instead of sleeping, he conceals himself one night in a bearskin robe to watch her actions.⁵⁹ Red Riding Hood was consumed by a live wolf, and joined her grandmother inside, while Ball has to hide in a dead bearskin to keep his grandmother under surveillance. But, **mutatis mutandis**, both achieve a vision of secret knowledge through getting inside and seeing from the perspective of a wild beast (symbolically their animal natures). Ball discovers that his grandmother is feeding the best food to Uncle, who remains concealed in a hidden room in the lodge. The word **Uncle** is capitalized because, like other names in this tale, it remains generic: the action is archetypal, mythic, not historical narrative. The presence of Uncle indicates the matristic nature of the community under consideration. In “such clan systems throughout most of humanity’s existence on this earth, fatherhood was unknown, and the primary adult male kinsman was the maternal uncle, united with the mother by the all-important uterine blood bond. Each man’s personal loyalty was to his mother’s clan and his sister’s children” (Walker 1985, p.46). The value of consanguinity remains latent, but not lost, in this community. But the characterization of this male figure remains significant. Red Riding Hood was discovered by her father, a powerful figure from the control complex, whereas Ball finds his uncle, a frightened fugitive from control, and evidently a member of the defeated military resistance.

⁵⁹ “Witch doctors, shamans, and other spiritual leaders often wrapped themselves in a wolfskin or bearskin and were said to have been possessed by the animal, thereby acquiring magical powers” (Zipes 1983, p.47).

thinking to impale this tiny bird. Ball was not being patient. He did not see that Wren was his ... special guardian”. But Wren foresees the threat and warns Ball how stupid it would be to kill him “when I have to come to aid you, to give you favours — skills and strength to match your boldness”. The previous slaying of small birds symbolizes Ball’s (and indirectly Uncle’s) abandonment of traditional, totemic lifeways. He does not recognize the sanctity of all life, and indeed has unwittingly shot down his spirit helper or power animal. He uses his gift or propensity unwisely — against his shamanic animal rather than the enemy. Hence, divided against himself, the ball remains ineffective against the cannibals. It can lacerate — the cannibal is “injured”, his cur “wounded” — but not kill them. Wren indicates that Ball’s energy and dexterity must be informed with visionary wisdom and spiritual guidance. “Be patient... be understanding... Be calm. Think! Control yourself ... Reflect on what will happen” (Clifton 1984, pp.30,29). So far Ball has been characterized by impetuous action rather than reflection, and in this respect he resembles his people as a whole. Wren counsels patience and expedience, but above all points him inward to the spiritual interior. There effective resistance can commence.

Wren divulges Uncle’s fate to Ball. The cannibals “order them [their victims] to do some impossible task. And they threaten these poor prisoners — if they do not succeed in these tasks, the Old Ones will clap them in prison and starve them to death. Then will the slaving Old Ones devour them — flesh, sinew, and blood, leaving only a pile of gnawed bones” (Clifton 1984, p.30). Once again the text prophetically enters the gulags, with their impossibly stringent work requirements, deliberately unfulfillable so that the controllers can achieve their real goal — the extermination of prisoners. But the metaphoric nature of cannibalism also becomes apparent at precisely this juncture. If the monsters were literally anthropophagic, they would fatten rather than starve their victims. The control complex spiritually emaciates the latter, parasitically extracting its lifeblood or life force, — absorbing its vital energies,

powerful force — these are familiar from contemporary accounts of totalitarianism such as **The Gulag Archipelago**.⁶²

But Ball continues to resist: he ignores the order not to follow, and trails the monsters and their captive. The trio board an “iron canoe”, clearly a product of industrial technology, and the cannibal strikes the side of the vessel, making a noise which imitates the sound of a machine. “At this sound the canoe shot swiftly forward across the lake”. As it does so, the cannibal chants a song of world-eating and technological glorification. “I will devour them all/them all/my victims!/I will cross in my canoe/my canoe.” But Ball will not permit this escape, and “reaching into his medicine pouch” throws the fanged sphere at the vessel. “Immediately the canoe and all in it were pulled back to shore”. Ball possesses magical powers which even control forces cannot withstand. He insists that he accompany them on the voyage. The propaganda machine cranks into action as the cannibal monster maintains: “Your uncle will only be visiting friends on the opposite shore. He will return in the morning. I assure you of this, you can believe me.” But Ball sees through these transparent lies, and the cannibal, “tired of all this unexpected defiance” (Clifton 1984, p.29) — resistance has become unfamiliar — consents to the boy’s request.

Following the trail to the cannibal village on the opposite shore, Ball notices the constant presence of Wren. “Getting annoyed, he reached into his medicine pouch and pulled out his toothed-ball,

⁶² “The shaman’s ability to subdue, control, appease, and direct spirits separates him or her from ordinary individuals, who are victims of these powerful forces” (Halifax 1980, p.11). Uncle becomes a passive victim of the cannibal monsters, who were earlier identified as “evil spirits”. Although possessing potential — witness his fanged sphere, medicine pouch, and use of the bearskin — Ball has yet to become a fully-fledged shaman, as his inability to defeat his opponents testifies.

Although as Ball is an aspiring medicine man, it should be noted that the English term medicine derives from Medea (or wisdom), a crone mother of the Medes. In becoming a shamanic healer, the young man consecrates himself to the dispensation of the grandmother, the matristic anarchy.

The next day, while Grandmother searches for food, Ball enters the secret room and converses with his uncle, who reveals that “those Man Eaters” — an accurate characterization of the world-eating Leviathan — “are after me”. By entering the sealed compartment, the boy has placed the man in danger: Uncle indicates that Ball’s intrusion has spoiled the “special power” (Clifton 1984, p.25) of concealment — an indication of the grandmother’s magical powers, given Uncle’s feebleness. But Ball remains unperturbed by Uncle’s forebodings, and requests that he fulfil his filial duties by showing his nephew how to make a bow and arrows. Uncle complies with this entreaty. Unlike Red Riding Hood’s father, the adult male figure in this tale is benevolent. But the bow and arrows will never be used for anything except target practice. Ball’s power does not reside in weaponry: armed resistance to the control complex has already proven impotent.⁶⁰

When the grandmother ascertains that Ball has discovered the whereabouts of his uncle, she is aghast and describes the “terrible things” done by the “cannibal monsters” who threaten Uncle, how

⁶⁰ Uncle clearly represents Tecumseh, whose military resistance had been discredited. “For the Prophet, politics and religion were merged”. However: “The months following the Treaty of Fort Wayne [30 September 1809] formed a major watershed in the career of the Shawnee Prophet. Before the treaty Tenskwatawa and his emphasis on spiritual renewal had dominated the Indian movement... But after the Treaty of Fort Wayne, the nature of the Indian movement changed. Concern over the continued loss of land shifted the focus of Tenskwatawa’s followers away from religious solutions toward the more pragmatic leadership of Tecumseh... And so Tecumseh used the religious movement of his brother as the basis for his attempts to forge a political and military confederacy among the western tribes”. Tenskwatawa resented his brother’s actions and became particularly bitter after military resistance proved futile — especially given that “In many ways Tecumseh’s efforts to destroy the position of the village chiefs and become ‘alone the acknowledged chief of all the Indians’ (as he boasted to Harrison [William Henry Harrison, governor of Indiana territory] at Vincennes) was a concept more alien to traditional Indian ways than any of the teachings of the Prophet” (Edmunds 1983, pp.39,92,93). Tenskwatawa revenged himself on his authoritarian, centralizing brother by representing him as a weak and beaten man in the figure of Uncle.

“incredibly ugly” they are, of how these “evil spirits” are only seen in the shape of “hideous old people” and “ghastly animals”. But Ball, rather than frightened by these disclosures, becomes “eager to see one of these cannibal monsters” so he can “shoot my fanged-ball to fight him” (Clifton 1984, pp.23–4). Impatience and recklessness emerge as the boy’s chief characteristics.⁶¹ The grandmother prohibits Ball from making further visits to Uncle, but remains powerless to prevent them.

In all, four increasingly reckless meetings between uncle and nephew occur. The first takes place in the concealed room, where Uncle teaches Ball to make a bow and arrows. During the second Uncle emerges briefly from the secret chamber to watch his nephew undertake target practice with the bow and arrows. On the third, Uncle emerges for a longer period to watch Ball shoot down small birds with his fanged sphere. And on the fourth he again emerges to watch Ball resume his target practice with his bow and arrows. But on the latter occasion: “Uncle started to congratulate himself for having escaped the hideous **Hamotaleniwa** [cannibal monsters]. Instantly, even before he had half-shaped this happy idea, both Uncle and Ball heard the fierce growling of a large dog. It was coming from high above them, from the sky” (Clifton 1984, p.27). For all the grandmother’s fears and the uncle’s lack of caution, only when the latter becomes complacent and relaxes his vigilance, can he be discovered. Already the text has prefigured the era of thought police and total surveillance, where there is no hiding place except through shifts into altered states of consciousness, regions into which thought control cannot follow.

⁶¹ Ball evidently represents Tenskwatawa. Like the former, the Prophet was an orphan – his father was killed while fighting invaders, his mother abandoned him while fleeing from them. “Either abandoned or ignored by parent figures, he overcompensated for his insecurity [as a boy] through boastful harangues on his own importance. To add to his woes, while playing with a bow and iron-tipped arrows, he suffered an accident and lost the sight of his right eye” (Edmunds 1983, p.30). Hence Ball’s braggadocio and concern with bow and arrows.

Like the military resistance movement he symbolizes, the warrior Uncle encounters peril through fascination with weaponry and an armed solution to invasion. It thus remains appropriate that, as sky gods, the cannibalistic control forces descend like helicopter gunships to round up and exterminate the peoples of the earth.

Ball hides Uncle in the secret chamber, conceals the entrance and covers their tracks. But instantaneously he is confronted by the cannibal monster and his dog, both of whom have only one eye. Like the cyclops, mythic cannibals are often one-eyed. They possess linear perspective, Blake’s hated “Single vision and Newton’s sleep” – an inability to access “the multiplicities of experience” (Highwater 1981, p.68). But this does not prevent the domesticated dog from sniffing out and then lunging at the entrance to the concealed room. Ball responds, not by using his bow and arrows, despite his recently acquired dexterity and their proximity, but by reaching into “his medicine bag, his sack of special powers” (a phrase echoing the earlier reference to the grandmother’s magic) to extract “his sharp-toothed ball” – not a weapon, but a spiritual device (Clifton 1984, p.28).

But in itself the sphere remains insufficient to despatch the cannibals, for reasons which will become fully apparent later. It remains partly inadequate, however, because the cannibals are a machine: when Ball wounds one, the other assaults the door, and the fanged ball has to be removed and flung at the other, which only releases the first to resume the attack. This relentless mechanistic alternation eventually exhausts Ball, and the cannibals burst into the secret room. And although Uncle is a “young man” and a warrior, the “hideous old man”, the cannibal monster, possesses a demonic power over him. “Entering, he approached Uncle and bid him, ‘Follow me! Now!’ The terrified young man did so, showing no sign of resistance” (Clifton 1984, p.28). The barked order, the failure to resist, indeed the inability to resist an incomprehensibly